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# THE THRESHOLD OF ENGLISH PROSE

Selected & Edited  
by  
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## PREFACE

THE prejudice against a guide to or text-book of English literature still persists, even in face of a number of distressing facts. Educational theorists visualise the English lesson as a delightful *browse* (their pet metaphor) in the green pastures of English prose and poetry and drama. It is a comparatively harmless, Utopian dream, and has at least the merit of amusing the harassed English Master. The truth is that there is only one year in the ordinary four-year secondary school course when any "general" English can be studied, and that year is the third, *i.e.* the period between the "preparatory" years of the second and third forms, and the demoralising analytical set-book era of the fifth. We are still condemning our fifth-formers to the intensive cram of one or two "masterpieces" chosen arbitrarily by University authorities. Our young folk leave school, many of them, thinking that *A Tour to the Hebrides* is the outstanding example of English prose, that *The Golden Treasury*, Bk. III, is representative of English poetry, that *Twelfth Night* was written mainly that examiners should be able to ask for guesses at its date and demand a note on Picrogromitus. Certainly, then, in the fifths there is no opportunity for general study: as far as English literature is concerned a boy's education is over when once he has passed the fourth.

What then of the fourth? Does the boy or girl in that happy intermediate stage actually *browse*? Rarely,



if ever. Even if the spirit is willing the flesh is bound to be weak because his working day consists usually of seven lessons in subjects that are difficult, followed by a couple of hours' hard work in the evening. He himself is left pathetically with the mere rags and tatters of time. The picture is not unduly exaggerated; it is the solemn and tragic fate of all those boys and girls who are enjoying a secondary education to-day.

It is for these, and for such as having left school to go the easier way of business life suddenly find themselves confronted with a little leisure, that this guide-book has been compiled. Like the maps or guides to a great city it points out a few landmarks so that the traveller may find his way from one to the other, and profit in the journeying. The fourth-former, instead of ruining for ever his pleasure in Scott, Dickens and the rest by a forced and unnatural study of *Old Mortality* or *David Copperfield*, has here at least a chance of peeping over his grim fence into the more spacious fields. And the home-student—who was in the fourth form once—will perhaps a few years afterwards pick up the book again as a pleasant adviser in either the use of the Public Library or the formation of his own.

H. A. TREBLE

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## I. THE ESSAY

Wordsworth wrote a famous sonnet on the Sonnet, and many novelists have given us, somewhere in their works, their conception of a novel. An essay on the Essay would have to begin with a definition. Johnson, in that downright, blundering way which even Boswell comments on, called it "a loose sally of the mind," and so damned it with faint praise. Yet he wrote more than half a truth. The essay is a "loose sally," a spontaneous leap of the thought. It has nothing to do, in the first place, with the acquisition of facts, the formal arrangement of ideas, the intricate weaving of a plot. The essayist is a lyric writer in prose; he is the recorder of his own "moods," as they come unawares, arousing his interest in this and that. Right at the beginning Bacon, following Montaigne in French, chronicled in that odd, stilted, sturdy way of his, a serious philosophy of life and a host of little interests. Cowley followed him in a style that was more homely and familiar; and after him, when the eighteenth century saw the perfecting of our English prose, the essay found that place in literature which it has never lost. It linked itself with journalism; it became the vehicle of day by day commentary.

Since then the essay has, as it were, kept pace with life; at its best it has had a brief transience that, touched with genius, suddenly became immortal. Long formal treatises, solemn philosophies, gigantic reviews, if they have survived, have survived on other merits—they are called essays only in error or by courtesy. The essay is best brief, lightly serious, pleasantly earnest. It laughs or is sad, reflects sunlight or shadow, gives back the swift movement of the street or the quiet of the countryside, is wise or witty, charitable or touched with all uncharitableness. Satire, humour, pathos—all these belong to it as they belong to life; since the essay is the crystallising of some tiny fragment of life itself. Its form must be all

the more finely wrought and perfect in detail for being little—there can be nothing really “loose” about the construction of an essay. Yet no trace of scaffolding must remain. The essay demands an artist in miniature, who can make perfect the trifles.

So the best essays, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, have been contributions to periodic literature. All those printed in this book were first published in magazines, for the readers of their own day. The first one is dated 9 July, 1711, and appeared in *The Spectator*, the earliest of all literary journals; one or two of them belong to the Reviews of the early nineteenth century, when *Elia* was the talk of the town; and the last one, a perfect essay by the tests outlined in this note, was published in *The Saturday Review* in January 1929. We have only to glance at the journals of to-day to realise that the essay is among the greatest of modern literary forms. It is, perhaps, ephemeral, passing, as the magazine essay is bound to be; but the touchstone of genius turns this one and that (as it has done for the past two hundred years) into the gold that survives the refiner's fire.

## JOSEPH ADDISON

1672–1719

### SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεοὺς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται,  
Τίμα——. PYTHAGORAS.

*First, in obedience to thy country's rites,  
Worship th' immortal Gods.*

I AM always very well pleased with a country Sunday; and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and

civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country-people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the church-yard as a citizen does upon the Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good church-man, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassoc and a Common Prayer Book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed out-do most of the country churches that I have ever heard.



As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character, make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes

## SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then he inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising-day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a fitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the 'squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always at the 'squire, and the 'squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The 'squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, almost in every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that

the 'squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

## SIR RICHARD STEELE

1672-1729



### THE SPECTATOR CLUB

*Ast alii sex*

*Et plures uno conclamant ore.*

JUV. Sat. VII, 167.

*Six more at least join their consenting voice.*

The first of our society is a gentleman of *Worcestershire*, of ancient descent, a Baronet, his name Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir ROGER. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and

are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho-Square. It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir ROGER was what you call a Fine Gentleman, had often supped with my Lord *Rochester* and Sir *George Etherege*, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully *Dawson* in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, chearful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company: When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit, that

Sir ROGER is a justice of the Queen's Bench; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the game-act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us, is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner-Temple; a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures, in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. (He is studying the passions themselves, when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them.) He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool, but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable: As few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the

present world. He is an excellent critick, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through *New-Inn*, crosses through *Russel-Court*, and takes a turn at *Will's* until the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the *Rose*. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir ANDREW FREEPORT, a merchant of great eminence in the city of *London*. A person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the *British Common*. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, "A penny saved is a penny got." A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir ANDREW having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that *England* may be richer than

other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though, at the same time, I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir ANDREW in the club-room sits Captain SENTRY, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements, and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir ROGER, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier, as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will however, in his way of talk, excuse generals, for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it: For, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him: Therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure,

especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from an habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humourists, unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have among us the gallant WILL HONEYCOMB, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but a very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces in his brain. His person is well turned, of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the *French* court ladies our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way



of placing their hoods, and whose vanity, to shew her foot, made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge have been in the female world: As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you when the Duke of *Monmouth* danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the *Park*. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord such-a-one. This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man who is usually called a well-bred Fine Gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom, but, when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to: He is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud

advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interests in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

## A DESCRIPTION OF A CLUB OF AUTHORS

Were we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not even China itself, could equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day, which, upon computation, makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. <sup>entire</sup> History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of nature, are all comprised in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If, then, we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press, (and surely none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms), at this

rate every scholar will read a thousand books in one year.—From such a calculation, you may conjecture what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of, who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written.

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are not, in reality, so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to perfection; whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognizance of all the doctors in the kingdom who profess authorship. In England, every man may be an author that can write; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being also as dull as they please.

Yesterday, I testified my surprise to the man in black where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of instructing the world. But to obviate<sup>per se</sup> this objection, my companion assured me that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgot their reading; but if you desire, continued he, to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club, which assemble every Saturday at seven, at the sign of the Broom near Islington, to talk over the business of the last, and the entertainment of the week ensuing. I accepted this invitation; we

walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the host excepted: who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

The first person, said he, of our society, is Doctor Nonentity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular: he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I'm told he writes indexes to perfection, he makes essays on the origin of evil, philosophical inquiries upon any subject, and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours' warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long grey wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck.

The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll<sup>ow</sup> creature; he sometimes shines as a star of the first magnitude among the choice spirits of the age; he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and a hymn for the tabernacle. You will know him by a shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt and broken silk stockings.

After him succeeds Mr Tibs, a very useful hand; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an Eastern tale to perfection: he understands the business of an author as well as any man, for no bookseller alive can cheat him. You may

distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure, and the coarseness of his coat; however, though it be coarse (as he frequently tells the company) he has paid for it.

Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society; he makes speeches for Parliament, writes addresses to fellow-subjects, and letters to noble commanders; he gives the history of every new play, and finds seasonable thoughts upon every occasion. My companion was proceeding in his description when the host came running in with terror on his countenance to tell us that the door was beset with bailiffs. If that be the case then, says my companion, we had as good be going; for I am positive we shall not see one of the company this night. Wherefore, disappointed, we were both obliged to return home, he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

#### THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB OF AUTHORS

By my last advices from Moscow, I find the caravan has not yet departed for China: I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of letters at once. In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or dispositions. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterizing a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances which first influenced their opinion. The genius of a country

should be investigated with a kind of experimental inquiry: by this means, we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the club of authors; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled, and engaged in a loud debate.

The poet in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavouring to persuade the company to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem, which he had composed the day before. But against this all the members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the poet pleaded the peculiar merit of his piece; he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances: the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, "That whatsoever poet, speech-maker, critic, or historian, should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading: the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompense for their trouble."

Our poet seemed at first to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit

the fine, or shut up the poem; but, looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame outweighed his prudence, and laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his prerogative.

A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. "Gentlemen," says he, "the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper-kites in summer; there are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it; it is an heroical description of Nature. I only beg you'll endeavour to make your souls in unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bed-chamber: the picture was sketched in my own apartment; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero." Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded:

Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way,  
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;  
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,  
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug;  
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray,  
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay;  
The sanded floor, that grits beneath the tread;  
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;  
The royal game of goose was there in view  
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;  
The seasons, fram'd with listing, found a place,  
And brave Prince William showed his lamp black face.  
The morn was cold, he views with keen desire  
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;

With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scor'd,  
And five cracked tea-cups dress'd the chimney board;  
A night-cap deck'd his brows instead of bay,  
A cap by night—a stocking all the day!

With this last line he seemed so much elated that he was unable to proceed. "There, gentlemen," cries he, "there is a description for you; Rabelais's bed-chamber is but a fool to it.

*A cap by night—a stocking all the day!*

There is sound, and sense, and truth, and nature in the trifling compass of ten syllables."

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe the company; who, by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled laughter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to each for their opinion, and found all, however, ready to applaud. One swore it was inimitable; another said it was mighty fine; and a third cried out in a rapture, Carissimo. At last, addressing himself to the president, "and pray, Mr Squint," says he, "let us have your opinion." "Mine!" answered the president, (taking the manuscript out of the author's hand), "May this glass suffocate me, but I think it equal to any thing I have seen; and I fancy (continued he, doubling up the poem and forcing it into the author's pocket), that you will get great honour when it comes out; so I shall beg leave to put it in. We will not intrude upon your good-nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present; *ex ungue Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied." The author made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time, and the president made as



many to prevent him. Thus, though with reluctance, he was at last obliged to sit down, contented with the commendations for which he had paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise was blown over, one of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any man could be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay. "Would you think it, gentlemen," continued he, "I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve sprightly jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence a-piece; and what is still more extraordinary, the bookseller has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend's stall; but now, alas, we have neither piety, taste, or humour, among us. Positively, if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment."

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time: a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present. "I know not how it happens," said he, "though I follow them up as close as possible, yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half-opened, that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription-proposal upon my Lord Squash the Creolean. I had posted myself at his door the

whole morning, and just as he was getting into his coach, thrust my proposal snug into his hand, folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and not knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet-de-chambre; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter; the porter grasped my proposal frowning; and measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened."

"To the devil I pitch all the nobility," cries a little man, in a peculiar accent, "I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I sat myself down, and vamped up a fine flaunting poetical panegyric, which I had written in such a strain, that I fancied it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected to touch for a bank-bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace had sent me in payment for my

poem, no bank-bills, but six copies of verses, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion."

"A nobleman," cries a member, who had hitherto been silent, "is created as much for the confusion of us authors, as the catch-pole. I'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay.—When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes; but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a suit of clothes, and hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately: though I was at the time rich in fame, for my book ran like wildfire, yet I was very short in money and being unable to satisfy his demand, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing at home, to one of my tailor's choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel; in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern; in vain they came with an urgent message from my aunt in the country; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell.—I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant; the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room.

"This was very well for a fortnight; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the Earl of Doomsday, importing, that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it; he

impatiently longed to see the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had quite the looks of a gentleman.—Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumphed at my own importance! I saw a long perspective of felicity before me; I applauded the taste of the times which never saw genius forsaken: I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion; five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and house mentioned in his lordship's address. I had the precaution to pull up the window as I went along, to keep off the busy part of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished for moment of its stopping arrived: this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the window in a transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship's magnificent palace and situation, I found, poison to my sight! I found myself not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane; not at a nobleman's door, but the door of a spunging-house! I found the coachman had all this while been just driving me to jail; and I saw the bailiff, with a devil's face, coming out to secure me."

To a philosopher, no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences, which are passed over by

the rest of mankind, as low, trite, and indifferent; it is from the number of these particulars, which to many appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions: this, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China, accounts of manners, and follies, which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterize this people, than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors.

CHARLES LAMB

1775-1834

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

*Sera tamen respexit*

*Libertas.*

VIRGIL.

*A Clerk I was in London gay.* O'KEEFE.

If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school

days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours a day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The only relief is in the fields on that day look any thing but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to

go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I

did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as



to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille, suddenly let loose after a forty years confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have all his Time to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons

grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

that's born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at

least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting-House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks, with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard speaking of a friend's death:

... 'Twas but just now he went away;  
I have not since had time to shed a tear;  
And yet the distance does the same appear  
As if he had been a thousand years from me.  
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not,—at

quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that soothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of

novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural for me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at 11 o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing-lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to

follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holy-day as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer \*\*\*\*\*, clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at

no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est*. I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

1894—



AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S

Last Saturday afternoon I visited Madame Tussaud—and hardly recognized her. My recollections of the old place are of a dingy building, a place with a mournful railway waiting-room atmosphere and not many patrons. The new building is very gay, and, what is more astonishing, it is well patronized. There was a crowd of us last Saturday afternoon, and I for one could only catch a glimpse of the heads of the present Royal Family, so dense was the loyal throng in front of this group. When I first entered the Grand Hall, I saw there, all round the room—two sets of people staring at one another. The only difference was that the set lower down, with their backs towards me, made little movements, turned their heads and nudged one another, whereas the other set kept perfectly still. This first crazy glimpse

was easily the best thing the exhibition had to offer me. For when I say that I hardly recognized Madame and that she is now quite gay, I refer only to the actual building and its decorations (though I might also include the five girls in black-and-white who form a rather desperate little orchestra), and not to the exhibits. These are just the same, except that perhaps the new bright building makes them look all the more curious.

There is something sinister about wax. No wonder wax figures play such a notable part in black magic. It is the ideal medium for the effigies of murderers. The actual craftsmanship in this image-making is very good, but it is given a sinister twist by the evil substance. I have no doubt whatever that M. Tussaud and his assistants have a genuine admiration for the subjects of their art, and believe they are doing honour to them by making these effigies. Nevertheless I could understand a stranger who insisted that there is deadly satire behind this show of figures in the Grand Hall. Here are all our kings and dictators and statesmen and generals and powerful ecclesiastics, and they are terrifying. These are the Baldwins and Winston Churchills and Chamberlains of Moscow. As you creep past these staring rows, you are not surprised we have already had one Great War and several revolutions; indeed, you are astonished that Europe has not been utterly destroyed. There are wrinkles here that could plot the destruction of millions. Even Jack Hobbs looks as if he had put away an umpire or two in his time.

There is a literary corner. "Oo's tha' in the



chair?" a little boy in front of me enquired. "That's Tickenss," his mother told him. "We got his bookss atome." I wonder how many visitors will buy the works of the modern authors after seeing their images in that corner. Mr Bernard Shaw, in a very neat light grey lounge suit, is smiling sardonically. I must confess he looks at home there. The eyebrows and spectacles of Mr Kipling are admirable. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle looked faintly ectoplasmic, and Sir Oliver Lodge looked so patriarchal that I felt he would have been happier, science or no science, in one of the earlier historical tableaux in the next room. Hardy gave the impression that the President of the Immortals had won the last trick—by cheating. A horrible, lumpy face at the back, bulging out of a curiously collar and tie, turned out to be Mr H. G. Wells. He is described in the catalogue as a "vigorous critic of the existing social order." This Wells looks as if he did his criticizing with an axe. It must be queer to sit at home, a comfortable, pink, and sprightly human being, and know that all the time this other sinister self is standing and staring balefully in the Grand Hall. Suppose it came to visit you in the middle of the night—moving slowly and stiffly across the bedroom to waken you with a touch of its waxen hand?

There were not many people in the Hall of Kings. Evidently the interest in Plantagenets and Tudors is not what it was in the Marylebone Road. The most impressive figure there is Henry VIII, whose head is colossal and straight out of a nightmare. Has papistry been at work here? The Hall of Tableaux upstairs

attracted more attention than the kings. The Tussaud view of history is that it is at best a dark business, an affair of dim red lights and fierce bearded faces. Even the most innocent subject was touched with the macabre. The announcement to Queen Victoria of her accession demands almost idyllic treatment; the young girl standing in her dressing gown, with the Archbishop and Lord Conyngham kneeling before her. But once again the wax has had its own sinister way; and you would swear that the two men you see there are a couple of potential murderers and that the girl herself is about to stamp her foot and release a trap-door that will swallow them both. ✓

There were plenty of us in the Chamber of Horrors. I visited it once before, years ago, and it did not seem greatly changed when I saw it again the other afternoon. On the whole my sympathies are with the good lady I overheard saying to her husband and his friend: "Look here, don't stay too long down here." What a queer immortality those poor animals and lunatics have arrived at in that dim cellar! There is a glass case in which some odds and ends, a cigar box, pencils, and so forth, once the property of George Joseph Smith, who drowned his wives in the bath, are treasured. Even one of the very baths is there. If these murderers had souls, if they are now spirits and are allowed to go where they will, then they must flock every Saturday to this Chamber, for when they were not mere brutes they were nearly all men of a vanity so overweening that it left them crazed. Do you imagine that their ghosts are indifferent to this grim glory of the extra sixpence and the special

chamber, the numbers and the catalogued description? Vanity and egoism drove them to commit murder, and when a hand fell on their shoulders and the dock loomed before them, they thought at first they had failed. But no, they had succeeded beyond their dreams. The crowds outside the court, the columns of descriptions and comment, the photographs—and now, when millions of good men have been forgotten and all their belongings gone to the dustbin, they keep their state, are immortal in the Marylebone Road, where the very fire that melted whole dynasties above left their effigies and relics untouched.

Some people believe that nothing in the world is dumb. Our sticks and stones, they say, confide their experiences to the spirit within us. Everybody—even the densest of us—has felt at some time or other that a certain old house or room had an evil atmosphere. Then what about these assembled relics of murder? Are they still whispering, out of their own agony, to the souls of the curious spectators? I was wondering about this, the other afternoon down there, when suddenly, without any previous warning, there came one loud deep note of a bell—a horrible sound. Everyone jumped about six inches into the air. It was, I suppose, the old Toll Bell from Newgate that had given tongue. I know that for one wild moment I had a vision of the whole beastly place coming to life; the murderers stretching, yawning, fixing their eyes on us, then slowly advancing; the hangmen's ropes twitching and curling; the guillotine rising and falling; the treadmill revolving; while that mon-

strous bell went tolling, tolling. All that did happen, however, was that the attendant, who was learned in murder—"my books tells me," he always said—began a little lecture tour of the figures. His favourite phrase was "the wily eye." I heard about the "wily eye of Justice 'Awkins" and the "wily eye of the Austyrians," and I have no doubt that if I had listened carefully to all that he had to say I could have made an amusing character out of him. But I did not stay long enough; I sought the open air; and though it was only the air of the Marylebone Road at the dusk of a heavy winter day, it really did seem very open indeed, most pleasantly sweet to the nostrils.

## II. THE LETTER

It is often said that we have lost the art of letter-writing in these days. If that is true, the loss must be attributed first to our lack of time in the hurry of modern life, and secondly to the fact that we have little left to write about. The world has closed up around us; we travel over known paths and but seldom stray into the unfamiliar. There is no news to tell; it is across the wires or through the ether before we have time to take up a pen. Even those letters we do write in the pressure of business, or when we are actuated, as it were, by some old custom that died before the telephone came into being, are mere notes to be destroyed, ephemeral things that scarcely survive a glance.

Yet the letter, in the slower and quieter days of old, was a real part of literature. Men sat down to talk to one another on paper—not merely to tell news or make an appointment, but to express thoughts and emotions, to laugh together now and then, to sympathise, friend with friend. And the best of their letters have survived for our delight; they make up a spontaneous literature of their own which cannot be paralleled in the more conscious, deliberate forms of writing. To read the letters of Cicero is to recapture the intimacy of an age long past; or to turn to the most familiar of ancient letters—those of Saint Paul—is to re-create in the imagination the man himself—zealous, bad-tempered now and then, getting old and forgetful, longing for the care and comfort of friends. There is, perhaps, no more interesting document in the world than his letter to Philemon. It breathes, as every letter should breathe, the spirit of the man who wrote it; and it suggests, as every true letter should, the character of the man to whom it was written. All great letters have that duo-personality—they belong to both writer and receiver. They are the visible sign of a mood that two people share, whether of sorrow or laughter, of work or leisure, of travel or home.

It is significant that the great age of English letters was the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth—the time when prose style had become perfected, and there was still left a leisure that the industrial revolution shattered to pieces and time has never put together again. Many of the letters printed in this book belong to that period. Here is one of Lord Chesterfield's entertaining, half cynical letters to his son; and, on another page, is Johnson's letter, packed with sustained and deliberate irony, to Macpherson at the height of the Ossian controversy. Horace Walpole, the dilettante purveyor of ghosts and marvels, describes his freakish castle on Strawberry Hill; Dorothy Osborne writes in half tender intimacy to Sir William Temple; and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, perhaps the greatest of traveller letter-writers, tells of a novel cure for small-pox, then the deadly scourge of England.

Here, too, the great Doctor Swift unbends as he writes to Mr Pope about his *Travels*, that terrible book which stands alone in English for its fancy, prose style and bitter irony. But the letter does not reveal the Swift of *Gulliver*; indeed all his letters show us a kind, sometimes whimsical, now and then tender, but loyal friend behind the cynical misanthrope. It is always good to turn from Swift's satire to his letters; to watch the gloomy dean in a playful mood, and share in these friendships which lit up a life too dark with savage indignation. Thomas Gray the quiet, earnest scholar, writes home, describing to his mother the joys and incidents of his travels. The famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* has a new interest when we read it in the light of the intimate revelations of its author. Elia is here, too, writing to his friend Manning with a whimsical charm and a gentle humour that are rarely absent from his essays and letters alike. There is no more gentle friend in English literature than Charles Lamb, unless it is, perhaps, that melancholy soul who, far enough away from Lamb in all other ways, loved like him the fireside and the home—William Cowper. He is among the greatest of those who practised what Mr E. V. Lucas has called "the gentlest art."

## JONATHAN SWIFT

1667-1745



To MR POPE

29 September, 1725.

I AM now returning to the noble scene of Dublin, into the *grand monde*, for fear of burying my parts, to signalize myself among curates and vicars, and correct all corruptions crept in relating to the weight of bread and butter, through those dominions where I govern.

I have employed my time (besides ditching) in finishing, correcting, amending, and transcribing my *Travels*, in four parts complete, newly augmented and intended for the press when the world shall deserve them, or rather when a printer shall be found brave enough to venture his ears.

I like the scheme of our meeting after distresses and dispersions. But the chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it; and if I could compass that design without hurting my own person or fortune, I would be the most indefatigable writer you have ever seen without reading. I am exceedingly pleased that you have done with translations. Lord-Treasurer Oxford often lamented that a rascally world should lay you under a necessity of misemploying your genius for so long a time. But since you will now be so much

better employed, when you think of the world, give it one lash the more at my request.

I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities; and all my love is towards individuals. For instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers; but I love Counsellor Such-a-one, and Judge Such-a-one. It is so with physicians (I will not speak of my own trade), soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest.

But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is the system upon which I have governed myself many years (but do not tell), and so I shall go on until I have done with them.

I have got materials towards a treatise proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale*, and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy, the whole building of my travels is erected; and I never will have peace of mind till all honest men are of my opinion. By consequence you are to embrace it immediately, and procure that all who deserve my esteem may do so too. The matter is so clear that it will admit of no dispute; nay, I will hold a hundred pounds that you and I agree in the point.

I did not know your *Odyssey* was finished, being yet in the country, which I shall leave in three days. I thank you kindly for the present, but shall like it three-fourths the less for the mixture you mention of other hands; however, I am glad you saved yourself so much drudgery. I have been long told by Mr Ford of your great achievements in building and planting, and especially of your subterranean passage to your



garden, whereby you turned a blunder into a beauty, which is a piece of *Ars Poetica*.

The lady whom you describe to live at court, to be deaf, and no party-woman, I take to be Mythology, but I know not how to moralize it. She cannot be Mercy, for Mercy is neither deaf, nor lives at court; Justice is blind, and perhaps deaf, but neither is she a court-lady; Fortune is both blind and deaf, and a court-lady; but then she is a most damnable party-woman, and will never make me easy as you promise. It must be Riches, which answers all your description. I am glad she visits you, but my voice is so weak that I doubt she will never hear me.

Mr Lewis sent me an account of Dr Arbuthnot's illness, which is a very sensible affliction to me, who, by living so long out of the world, have lost that hardness of heart contracted by years and general conversation. I am daily losing friends, and neither seeking nor getting others. Oh, if the world had but a dozen Arbuthnots in it, I would burn my *Travels*! But, however, he is not without fault.

There is a passage in Bede, highly commending the piety and learning of the Irish in that age, where, after abundance of praises, he overthrows them all, by lamenting that, alas! they kept Easter at a wrong time of the year. So our Doctor has every quality and virtue that can make a man amiable or useful; but, alas, he has a sort of slouch in his walk! I pray God protect him, for he is an excellent Christian, though not a Catholic.

I hear nothing of my friend Gay; but I find the court keeps him at hard meat. I advised him to

come over here with a Lord-Lieutenant. Philips writes little flams (as Lord Leicester called those sort of verses) on Miss Carteret. A Dublin blacksmith, a great poet, has imitated his manner in a poem to the same Miss. Philips is a complainer, and on this occasion I told Lord Carteret that complainers never succeed at court, though railers do.

Are you altogether a country gentleman, that I must address to you out of London, to the hazard of your losing this precious letter, which I will now conclude, although so much paper is left? I have an ill name, and therefore shall not subscribe it, but you will guess it comes from one who esteems and loves you about half as much as you deserve; I mean as much as he can.

I am in great concern at what I am just told is in some of the newspapers, that Lord Bolingbroke is much hurt by a fall in hunting. I am glad he has so much youth and vigour left (of which he has not been thrifty), but I wonder he has no more discretion.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

1689-1762



TO MRS SARAH CHISWELL

*Ingrafting for small-pox*

Adrianople, 1 April, o.s. [1717].

In my opinion, dear S., I ought rather to quarrel with you for not answering my Nimeguen letter of August till December, than to excuse my not writing

again till now. I am sure there is on my side a very good excuse for silence, having gone such tiresome land-journeys, though I don't find the conclusion of them so bad as you seem to imagine. I am very easy here, and not in the solitude you fancy me. The great number of Greek, French, English, and Italians, that are under our protection, make their court to me from morning till night; and, I'll assure you, are many of them very fine ladies; for there is no possibility for a Christian to live easily under this government but by the protection of an ambassador—and the richer they are, the greater their danger.

Those dreadful stories you have heard of the plague have very little foundation in truth. I own I have much ado to reconcile myself to the sound of a word which has always given me such terrible ideas, though I am convinced there is little more in it than a fever. As a proof we passed through two or three towns most violently infected. In the very next house where we lay (in one of them) two persons died of it. Luckily for me, I knew nothing of the matter; and I was made believe, that our second cook who fell ill here, had only a great cold. However, we left our doctor to take care of him, and yesterday they both arrived here in good health; and now I am let into the secret that he has had the *plague*. There are many that escape it; neither is the air ever infected. I am persuaded that it would be as easy to root it out here as out of Italy and France; but it does so little mischief, they are not very solicitous about it, and are content to suffer this distemper instead of our variety, which they are utterly unacquainted with.

*A propos* of distempers: I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you wish yourself here. The small-pox, so fatal and so general among us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of *ingrafting*, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small-pox: they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen together) the old woman comes with a nut-shell full of the matter of the best sort of small-pox, and asks what veins you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch), and puts into the vein as much venom as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after that binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell; and in this manner opens four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, in each arm, and on the breast, to mark the sign of the cross; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs, or that part of the arm that is concealed. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never

mark; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded, there remain running sores during the distemper, which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French ambassador says pleasantly, that they take the small-pox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it; and you may believe I am very well satisfied of the safety of the experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son.

I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England; and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any one of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps, if I live to return, I may, however, have courage to war with them. Upon this occasion admire the heroism in the heart of your friend.

DOROTHY OSBORNE

1627-1695

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To WILLIAM TEMPLE

? 10 April, 1653.

Sir,

I am glad you 'scaped a beating, but, in earnest, would it had lighted upon my brother's groom. I think I should have beaten him myself if I had been

able. I have expected your letter all this day with the greatest impatience that was possible, and at last resolved to go out and meet the fellow; and when I came down to the stables, I found him come, had set up his horse, and was sweeping the stable in great order. I could not imagine him so very a beast as to think his horses were to be served before me, and therefore was presently struck with an apprehension he had no letter for me: it went cold to my heart as ice, and hardly left me courage enough to ask him the question; but when he had drawled it out that he thought there was a letter for me in his bag, I quickly made him leave his broom. 'Twas well 'tis a<sup>1</sup> dull fellow, he could not but have discern'd else that I was strangely overjoyed with it, and earnest to have it; for though the poor fellow made what haste he could to untie his bag, I did nothing but chide him for being so slow. At last I had it, and, in earnest, I know not whether an entire diamond of the ~~bigness on't~~ would have pleased me half so well; if it would, it must be only out of this consideration, that such a jewel would make me rich enough to dispute you with Mrs Cl., and perhaps make your father like me as well. I like him, I'll swear, and extremely too, for being so calm in a business, where his desires were so much crossed. Either he has a great power over himself, or you have a great interest in him, or both. If you are pleased it should end thus, I cannot dislike it; but if it would have been happy for you, I should think myself strangely unfortunate in being the cause that it went no further. I cannot say that I prefer your interest before my own, because all yours

are so much mine that 'tis impossible for me to be happy if you are not so; but if they could be divided I am certain I should. And though you reproached me with unkindness for advising you not to refuse a good offer, yet I shall not be discouraged from doing it again when there is occasion, for I am resolved to be your friend whether you will or no. And, for example, though I know you do not need my counsel, yet I cannot but tell you that I think 'twere very well that you took some care to make my Lady R. your friend, and oblige her by your civilities to believe that you were sensible of the favour was offered you, though you had not the grace to make good use on't. In very good earnest now, she is a woman (by all that I have heard of her) that one would not lose; besides that, 'twill become you to make some satisfaction for downright refusing a young lady—'twas unmercifully done.

Would to God you would leave that trick of making excuses! Can you think it necessary to me, or believe that your letters can be so long as to make them displeasing to me? Are mine so to you? If they are not, yours never will be so to me. You see I say anything to you, out of a belief that, though my letters were more impertinent than they are, you would not be without them nor wish them shorter. Why should you be less kind? If your fellow-servant has been with you, she has told you I part with her but for her advantage. That I shall always be willing to do; but whensoever she shall think fit to serve again, and is not provided of a better mistress, she knows where to find me.

I have sent you the rest of *Cléopâtre*, pray keep them all in your hands, and the next week I shall send you a letter and directions where you shall deliver that and the books for my lady. Is it possible that she can be indifferent to anybody? Take heed of telling me such stories; if all those excellencies she is rich in cannot keep warm a passion without the sunshine of her eyes, what are poor people to expect; and were it not a strange vanity in me to believe yours can be long-lived? It would be very pardonable in you to change, but, sure, in him 'tis a mark of so great inconstancy as shows him of an humour that nothing can fix. When you go into the Exchange, pray call at the great shop above, "The Flower Pott." I spoke to Hearn's, the man of the shop, when I was in town, for a quart of orange-flower water; he had none that was good then, but promised to get me some. Pray put him in mind of it, and let him show it you before he sends it me, for I will not altogether trust to his honesty; you see I make no scruple of giving you little idle commissions, 'tis a freedom you allow me, and that I should be glad you would take. The Frenchman that set my seals lives between Salisbury House and the Exchange, at a house that was not finished when I was there, and the master of the shop, his name is Walker, he made me pay 50s. for three, but 'twas too dear. You will meet with a story in these parts of *Cléopâtre* that pleased me more than any that ever I read in my life; 'tis of one Délie, pray give me your opinion of her and her prince. This letter is writ in great haste, as you may see; 'tis my brother's sick day, and I'm not willing to leave him long alone.



I forgot to tell you in my last that he was come hither to try if he can lose an ague here that he got in Gloucestershire. He asked me for you very kindly, and if he knew I writ to you I should have something to say from him besides what I should say for myself if I had room.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE

*Earl of Chesterfield*

1694-1773

To HIS SON

London, 10 Jan. o.s. 1749.

Dear Boy,

I have received your letter of the 31 December, n.s. Your thanks for my present, as you call it, exceed the value of the present; but the use which you assure me that you will make of it, is the thanks which I desire to receive. Due attention to the inside of books, and due contempt for the outside, is the proper relation between a man of sense and his books.

Now that you are going a little more into the world, I will take this occasion to explain my intentions as to your future expenses, that you may know what you have to expect from me, and make your plan accordingly. I shall neither deny nor grudge you any money that may be necessary for either your improvement or pleasures; I mean the pleasures of a rational being. Under the head of improvement I mean the best books, and the best masters, cost what they will; I also mean all the expense of lodgings, coach, dress,

servants, &c., which, according to the several places where you may be, shall be respectively necessary to enable you to keep the best company. Under the head of rational pleasures I comprehend, first, proper charities to real and compassionate objects of it; secondly, proper presents to those to whom you are obliged, or whom you desire to oblige; thirdly, a conformity of expense to that of the company which you keep; as in public spectacles, your share of little entertainments, a few pistoles at games of mere commerce, and other incidental calls of good company. The only two articles which I will never supply are, the profusion of low riot, and the idle lavishness of negligence and laziness. A fool squanders away, without credit or advantage to himself, more than a man of sense spends with both. The latter employs his money as he does his time, and never spends a shilling of the one, nor a minute of the other, but in something that is either useful or rationally pleasing to himself or others. The former buys whatever he does not want, and does not pay for what he does want. He cannot withstand the charms of a toy-shop; snuff-boxes, watches, heads of canes, etc., are his destruction. His servants and tradesmen conspire with his own indolence to cheat him, and in a very little time he is astonished, in the midst of all the ridiculous superfluities, to find himself in want of all the real comforts and necessities of life. Without care and method the largest fortune will not, and with them almost the smallest will, supply all necessary expenses. ~~As~~ As far as you can possibly, pay ready money for everything you buy, and avoid bills. Pay

that money too yourself, and not through the hands of any servant, who always either stipulates reward, or requires a present for his good word, as they call it. Where you must have bills, (as for meat and drink, clothes, etc.) pay them regularly every month, and with your own hand. Never, from a mistaken economy, buy a thing you do not want, because it is cheap; or from a silly pride, because it is dear. Keep an account in a book, of all that you receive, and of all that you pay; for no man, who knows what he receives and what he pays, ever runs out. I do not mean that you should keep an account of the shillings and half-crowns which you may spend in chair-hire, operas, etc. They are unworthy of the time, and of the ink that they would consume; leave such *minutiae* to dull, penny-wise fellows; but remember In economy, as well as in every other part of life, to have the proper attention to proper objects, and the proper contempt for little ones. A strong mind sees things in their true proportion; a weak one views them through a magnifying medium, which, like the microscope, makes an elephant of a flea; magnifies all little objects, but cannot receive great ones. I have known many a man pass for a miser, by saving a penny, and wrangling for two-pence, who was undoing himself at the same time, by living above his income, and not attending to essential articles, which were above his *portée*. The sure characteristic of a sound and strong mind is, to find in everything those certain bounds, *quos ultra citrave nequit consistere rectum*. These boundaries are marked out by a very fine line, which only good sense and attention can discover; it is much too

fine for vulgar eyes. In manners, this line is good-breeding; beyond it, is troublesome ceremony; short of it, is unbecoming negligence and inattention. In morals, it divides ostentatious puritanism from criminal relaxation; in religion, superstition from impiety; and, in short, every virtue from its kindred vice or weakness. I think you have sense enough to discover the line; keep it always in your eye, and learn to walk upon it; rest upon Mr Harte, and he will poise you, till you are able to go alone. By the way, there are fewer people who walk well upon that line, than upon the slack-rope; and, therefore, a good performer shines so much the more . . . .

Remember to take the best dancing-master at Berlin, more to teach you to sit, stand, and walk gracefully, than to dance finely. The graces, the graces; remember the graces! Adieu.

THOMAS GRAY

1716-1771



TO RICHARD WEST

You must know that I do not take degrees, and, after this term, shall have nothing more of college impertinences to undergo, which I trust will be some pleasure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last, supported by the hopes of being shortly at full liberty to give myself up to my friends and classical companions, who, poor souls! though I see them fallen

into great contempt with most people here, yet I cannot help sticking to them, and out of a spirit of obstinacy (I think) love them the better for it; and indeed, what can I do else? Must I plunge into metaphysics? Alas, I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas, I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said, "the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy of wild asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch and father under her shadow; it shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." You see here is a pretty collection of desolate animals, which is verified in this town to a tittle, and perhaps it may also allude to your habitation, for you know all types may be taken by abundance of handles; however, I defy your owls to match mine.

If the default of your spirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to say. We

all must submit to that wayward queen; I too in no small degree own her sway,

I feel her influence while I speak her power. But if it be a real distemper, pray take more care of your health, if not for your own at least for our sakes, and do not be so soon weary of this little world: I do not know what refined friendships you may have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in a hurry to see your acquaintance above; among your terrestrial familiars, however, though I say it, that should not say it, there positively is not one that has a greater esteem for you than yours most sincerely, etc.

Peterhouse, *December 1736.*

## HORACE WALPOLE

1717-1797

### TO SIR HORACE MANN

Strawberry Hill, 12 *June*, 1753.

I could not rest any longer with the thought of your having no idea of a place of which you hear so much, and therefore desired Mr Bentley to draw you as much idea of it as the post would be persuaded to carry from Twickenham to Florence. The enclosed enchanted little landscape, then, is Strawberry Hill; and I will try to explain so much of it as will help to let you know whereabouts we are when we are talking to you: for it is uncomfortable in so intimate a correspondence as ours not to be exactly master of every

spot where one another is writing, or reading, or sauntering.

This view of the castle is what I have just finished, and is the only side that will be at all regular. Directly before it is an open grove, through which you see a field, which is bounded by a serpentine wood of all kind of trees and flowering shrubs and flowers. The lawn before the house is situated on the top of a small hill, from whence, to the left, you see the town and church of Twickenham encircling a turn of the river that looks exactly like a sea-port in miniature. The opposite shore is a most delicious meadow, bounded by Richmond Hill, which loses itself in the noble woods of the Park to the end of the prospect on the right, where is another turn of the river, and the suburbs of Kingston as luckily placed as Twickenham is on the left: and a natural terrace on the top of my hill, with meadows of my own down to the river, commands both extremities. Is not this a tolerable prospect? You must figure that all this is perpetually enlivened by a navigation of boats and barges, and by a road below my terrace with coaches, post-chaises, waggons and horsemen constantly in motion, and the fields speckled with cows, horses and sheep. Now you shall walk into the house. The bow-window below leads into a little parlour hung with a stone-colour Gothic paper and Jackson's Venetian prints. From hence, under two gloomy arches, you come to the hall and staircase, which it is impossible to describe to you, as it is the most particular and chief beauty of the castle. Imagine the walls covered with (I call it paper, but it is really paper painted in perspective to

represent) Gothic fret-work: the lightest Gothic balustrade to the staircase, adorned with antelopes (our supporters) bearing shields: lean windows fattened with rich saints in painted glass, and a vestibule open, with three arches on the landing-place, and niches full of trophies of old coats-of-mail, Indian shields made of rhinoceros hides, broadswords, quivers, long-bows, arrows and spears,—all *supposed* to be taken by Sir Terry Robsart in the holy wars. The room on the ground floor nearest to you is a bed-chamber hung with yellow paper and prints framed in a new manner invented by Lord Cardigan,—that is, with black-and-white borders printed. Over this is Mr Chute's bed-chamber, hung with red in the same manner. The bow-window room one pair of stairs is not yet finished: but in the tower beyond it is the charming closet where I am now writing to you. It is hung with green paper and water-colour pictures, has two windows... the top of each gluttred with the richest painted glass of the arms of England, crimson roses, and twenty other pieces of green, purple, and historic bits. In this closet, which is Mr Chute's College of Arms, are two presses with books of *antiquities*, Madame Sévigné's *Letters* and any French books that relate to her and her acquaintance. Out of this closet is the room where we always live, hung with a blue-and-white paper in stripes adorned and a thousand plump chairs, couches, and luxurious settees covered with linen of the same pattern, and with a bow-window commanding the prospect, and gloomed with limes that shade half each window already darkened with painted glass in chiaroscuro,



set in deep blue glass. Under this room is a cool little hall, where we generally dine, hung with paper to imitate Dutch tiles.

I have described so much that you will begin to think that all the accounts I used to give you of the diminutiveness of our habitation were fabulous; but it is really incredible how small most of the rooms are. The only two good chambers I shall have are not yet built; they will be an eating-room and a library, each twenty by thirty, and the latter fifteen feet high. For the rest of the house, I could send it you in this letter as easily as the drawing, only that I should have nowhere to live till the return of the post.

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

My dear William,

I was sorry that I could only take a flying leave of you. When the coach stopped at the door, I thought you had been in your chamber; my deshabille would not otherwise have prevented my running down for the sake of a more suitable parting.

We rejoice that you had a safe journey, and though we should have rejoiced still more had you had no occasion for a physician, we are glad that, having had need of one, you had the good fortune to find him. Let us hear soon that his advice has proved effectual, and that you are delivered from all ill symptoms.

Thanks for the care you have taken to furnish me with a dictionary. It is rather strange that at my time of life, and after a youth spent in classical pursuits, I should want one; and stranger still that, being possessed at present of only one Latin author in the world, I should think it worth while to purchase one. I say that it is strange, and indeed I think it so myself. But I have a thought that when my present labours of the pen are ended, I may go to school again, and refresh my spirits by a little intercourse with the Mantuan and the Sabine bard; and perhaps by a re-perusal of some others, whose works we generally lay by at that period of life when we are best qualified to read them, when, the judgement and the taste being formed, their beauties are least likely to be overlooked.

This change of wind and weather comforts me, and I should have enjoyed the first fine morning I have seen this month with a peculiar relish, if our new tax-maker had not put me out of temper. I am angry with him, not only for the matter, but for the manner of his proposal. When he lays his impost upon horses, he is even jocular, and laughs; though considering that wheels, and miles, and grooms were taxed before, a graver countenance upon the occasion would have been more decent. But he provokes me still more by reasoning as he does on the justification of the tax upon candles. Some families, he says, will suffer little by it;—Why? Because they are so poor, that they cannot afford themselves more than ten pounds in the year. Excellent! They can use but few, therefore they will pay but little, and consequently will be but little burthened, an argument which for its cruelty

and effrontery seems worthy of a hero; but he does not avail himself of the whole force of it, nor with all his wisdom had sagacity enough to see that it contains, when pushed to its utmost extent, a free discharge and acquittal of the poor from the payment of any tax at all; a commodity, being once made too expensive for their pockets, will cost them nothing, for they will not buy it. Rejoice, therefore, O ye penniless! the minister will indeed send you to bed in the dark, but your remaining halfpenny will be safe; instead of being spent in the useless luxury of candlelight, it will buy you a roll for breakfast, which you will eat no doubt with gratitude to the man who so kindly lessens the number of your disbursements, and while he seems to threaten your money, saves it. I wish he would remember, that the halfpenny, which government imposes, the shopkeepers will swell to twopence. I wish he would visit the miserable huts of our lace-makers at Olney, and see them working in the winter months, by the light of a farthing candle, from four in the afternoon till midnight. I wish he had laid his tax upon the ten thousand lamps that illuminate the Pantheon, upon the flambeaux that wait upon ten thousand chariots and sedans in an evening, and upon the wax candles that give light to ten thousand card-tables. I wish, in short, that he would consider the pockets of the poor as sacred, and that to tax a people already so necessitous, is but to discourage the little industry that is left among us, by driving the laborious to despair.

A neighbour of mine, in Silver-end, keeps an ass; the ass lives on the other side of the garden wall, and

I am writing in the green-house: it happens that he is this morning most musically disposed, either cheered by the fine weather, or by some new tune which he has just acquired, or by finding his voice more harmonious than usual. It would be cruel to mortify so fine a singer, therefore I do not tell him that he interrupts and hinders me; but I venture to tell you so, and to plead his performance in excuse of my abrupt conclusion.

I send you the goldfinches, with which you will do as you see good. We have an affectionate remembrance of your late visit, and of all our friends at Stock.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

1709-1784

To MR JAMES MACPHERSON

20 *January*, 1775.

I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the publick, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

JAMES BOSWELL

1740-1795

—•—

To DAVID GARRICK

Inverness, 29 *August*, 1773.

My dear Sir,

Here I am, and Mr Samuel Johnson actually with me. We were a night at Fores, in coming to which, in the dusk of the evening, we passed over the bleak and blasted heath where Macbeth met the witches. Your old preceptor repeated, with much solemnity, the speech, "How far is't called to Fores? What are these, so withered and so wild in their attire?"

This day we visited the ruins of Macbeth's Castle at Inverness. I have had great romantic satisfaction in seeing Johnson upon the classical scenes of Shakespeare in Scotland; which I really looked upon as almost as improbable as that "Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane." Indeed, as I have always been accustomed to view him as a permanent London object, it would not be much more wonderful to me to see St Paul's Church moving along where we now are. As yet we have travelled in post-chaises; but tomorrow we are to mount on horseback, and ascend into the mountains by Fort Augustus, and go on to the ferry, where we are to cross to Skye. We shall see that island fully, and then visit some more of the Hebrides; after which we are to land in Argyleshire, proceed by Glasgow to Auchinleck, repose there a competent time, and then return to Edinburgh, from whence the Rambler will depart for old England

again, as soon as he finds it convenient. Hitherto we have had a very prosperous expedition. I flatter myself, *servetur ad imum, qualis ab incepto processerit*. He is in excellent spirits, and I have a rich journal of his conversation. Look back, *Davy*, to Lichfield; run up through the time that has elapsed since you first knew Mr Johnson, and enjoy with me his present extraordinary tour. I could not resist the impulse of writing to you from this place. The situation of the old castle corresponds exactly to Shakespeare's description. While we were there today, it happened oddly that a raven perched upon one of the chimney-tops, and croaked. Then I in my turn repeated:

The raven himself is hoarse,  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements!

I wish you had been with us. Think what an enthusiastic happiness I shall have to see Mr Samuel Johnson walking among the romantic rocks and woods of my ancestors at Auchinleck. Write to me at Edinburgh....I offer my very best compliments to Mrs Garrick, and ever am your warm admirer and friend.

CHARLES LAMB

1775-1834



To THOMAS MANNING.

10 May, 1806.

My dear Manning,

I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having

shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then——. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you; and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little Mandarin for our mantle-piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, "The Tempest," "Winter's Tale," "Mid-

summer Night," "Much Ado," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and "Cymbeline": "The Merchant of Venice" is in forwardness. I have done "Othello" and "Macbeth," and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It is to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan ant<sup>h</sup>rop<sup>h</sup>es. *Quam homo homini praeestat!* but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I daresay all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accom-



plishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

One thing more. When you get to Canton, you will most likely see a young friend of mine, Inspector of Teas, named Ball. He is a very good fellow and I should like to have my name talked of in China. Give my kind remembrances to the same Ball.

Good bye.

THOMAS HOOD

1799-1845



To CHARLES DICKENS

My dear Dickens,

Only thinking of the pleasure of seeing you again, with Mrs Dickens, on Tuesday or Wednesday, I never remembered, till I got home to my wife, who is also my flapper (not a young wild duck, but a Remembrancer of Laputa), that I have been booked to shoot some rabbits—if I can—at Wantage, in Berks. A reverend friend called “Peter Priggins” will be waiting for me, by appointment, at his railway-station on Tuesday. But I must and can only be three or four days absent; after which, the sooner we have the pleasure of seeing you the better for us.

Mrs Hood thinks there ought to be a ladies' dinner to Mrs Dickens. I think she wants to go to Greenwich, seeing how much good it has done me, for I went really ill and came home well. So that occasionally the diet of Gargantua seems to suit me better than that of *Panta-gruel*. Well,—adieu for the present. Live, fatten, prosper, write, and draw the mopuses wholesale through Chapman and *Haul*.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,

1850-1894

To W. E. HENLEY

Braemar [25 August, 1881].

My dear Henley,

Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now, I'm better, I think; and see here—nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers. They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd, this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, "The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Story for Boys."

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about Buccaneers, that it begins in the *Admiral Benbow* public-house on Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny,

and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind), and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho-and a bottle of rum" (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted, friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Routledge*? That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parient have to be consulted.

And now look here—this is next day—and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I. The Old Sea-dog at the *Admiral Benbow*. Chapter II. Black Dog appears and disappears. Chapter ~~III~~<sup>III</sup>, The Black Spot.) All now heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It's quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the *best* book about the Buccaneers that can be had—the latter B's above all, Blackbeard and Sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you'll write to me, for "The Sea Cook's" sake.

Your "Admiral Guinea" is curiously near my line, but of course I'm fooling; and your Admiral sounds like a shublime gent. Stick to him like wax—he'll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand

sea-miles off the lie of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling.—A chapter a day I mean to do; they are short; and perhaps in a month the “Sea Cook” may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! My Trelawney has a strong dash of Landor, as I see him from here. No women in the story, Lloyd’s orders; and who so blithe to obey? It’s awful fun boys’ stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that’s all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended—that I don’t see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils. You would like my blind beggar in Chapter III. I believe; no writing, just drive along as the words come and the pen will scratch!

### III. BIOGRAPHY

“And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead”—so runs the grim and laconic biography of the Old Testament. Even when the biographer has more to say of his subject, the lines are just as strongly and deliberately drawn. There is but little pre-occupation with detail; only here and there some apparently trifling record suddenly reveals the heights or depths of character. The story of Saul is a fine example of the simple and unrelenting truth that marks the Bible biography. It begins suddenly with a pen-picture of this fine man who was “head and shoulders above all the people”; continues mercilessly, yet with perfect justice, to narrate his gradual downfall, and ends with as stark and tragic a statement as can well be imagined: “So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.”

The great classic of English biography is far removed from such swift and bold portraiture as this. Boswell stood near his subject, sketched his every line, caught every detail of his face and figure, and reproduced the very accents of his voice. In the book of this strange hero-worshipper whom Gray once contemptuously called “a fool with a note-book,” is recaptured not only the life of a man but also the life of an age. We know Johnson as we know no other man in English literature; and with him we know his London, a hurrying, vital city of famous men, where Goldsmith was writing plays in his garret, David Garrick acting, Sir Joshua Reynolds painting, Mr Pope polishing his famous couplets, and the Literary Club gathering to hear the talk of the town. Boswell’s Johnson is a dominating figure, almost a type of the true-born Englishman; but odd and romantic too—the great Cham with his wig awry, shuffling gait, awkward figure and untidy clothes, and the great voice which made “little fishes talk like big whales.”

In Southey's Nelson and Johnson's own Milton—the most famous of the *Lives of the Poets*—we have that type of biography which emphasises the outstanding genius of its subject. Nelson is the sailor; Southey builds up the story of his life on that element of reckless courage which was to have its climax in the great scene on the *Victory*. Isaac Walton pictures in George Herbert the quiet piety of the parish priest. In the same way Johnson concentrates not so much on Milton the man as on Milton the poet, and is more concerned with an analysis of *Lycidas* than with a personal portrait of its author.

## ISAAC WALTON

1593-1683

### MR HERBERT BECOMES RECTOR OF BEMERTON

AND the same night that he had his induction, he said to Mr Woodnot, "I now look back upon my aspiring thoughts, and think myself more happy than if I had attained what then I so ambitiously thirsted for. And I can now behold the Court with an impartial eye, and see plainly that it is made up of fraud and titles, and flattery, and many other such empty, imaginary, painted pleasures; pleasures, that are so empty, as not to satisfy when they are enjoyed. But in God, and his service, is a fulness of all joy and pleasure, and no satiety. And I will now use all my endeavours to bring my relations and dependents to a love and reliance on Him, who never fails those that trust him. But above all, I will be sure to live well, because the virtuous life of a Clergyman is the most

powerful eloquence to persuade all that see it to reverence and love, and at least to desire to live like him. And this I will do, because I know we live in an age that hath more need of good examples than precepts. And I beseech that God, who hath honoured me so much as to call me to serve him at his altar, that as by his special grace he hath put into my heart these good desires and resolutions; so he will, by his assisting grace, give me ghostly strength to bring the same to good effect. And I beseech him, that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others, as to bring glory to my Jesus, whom I have this day taken to be my Master and Governor; and I am so proud of his service, that I will always observe, and obey, and do his will; and always call him, Jesus my Master; and I will always condemn my birth, or any title or dignity that can be conferred upon me, when I shall compare them with my title of being a Priest, and serving at the Altar of Jesus my Master."

And that he did so, may appear in many parts of his book of *Sacred Poems*: especially in that which he calls *The Odour*. In which he seems to rejoice in the thoughts of that word *Jesus*, and say, that the adding these words, *my Master*, to it, and the often repetition of them, seemed to perfume his mind, and leave an oriental fragrancy in his very breath. And for his unforced choice to serve at God's altar, he seems in another place of his poems, *The Pearl* (Matt. xiii. 45, 46), to rejoice and say—"He knew the ways of learning; knew what nature does willingly, and what, when it is forced by fire; knew the ways of honour, and when glory inclines the soul to noble expressions:

knew the Court; knew the ways of pleasure, of love, of wit, of music, and upon what terms he declined all these for the service of his Master Jesus"; and then concludes, saying,

That, through these labyrinths, not my grovelling wit,  
 But thy silk-twist, let down from Heaven to me,  
 Did both conduct, and teach me, how by it  
 To climb to thee.

The third day after he was made Rector of Bemerton, and had changed his sword and silk clothes into a canonical coat, he returned so habited with his friend Mr Woodnot to Bainton; and immediately after he had seen and saluted his wife, he said to her—"You are now a Minister's wife, and must now so far forget your father's house, as not to claim a precedence of any of your parishioners; for you are to know, that a Priest's wife can challenge no precedence or place, but that which she purchases by her obliging humility; and I am sure, places so purchased do best become them. And let me tell you, that I am so good a Herald, as to assure you that this is truth." And she was so meek a wife, as to assure him, "it was no vexing news to her, and that he should see her observe it with a cheerful willingness." And, indeed, her unforced humility, that humility that was in her so original, as to be born with her, made her so happy as to do so; and her doing so begot her an unfeigned love, and a serviceable respect from all that conversed with her; and this love followed her in all places, as inseparably as shadows follow substances in sunshine.

It was not many days before he returned back to Bemerton, to view the Church, and repair the



Chancel: and indeed to rebuild almost three parts of his house, which was fallen down, or decayed by reason of his predecessor's living at a better Parsonage-house; namely, at Minal, sixteen or twenty miles from this place. At which time of Mr Herbert's coming alone to Bemerton, there came to him a poor old woman, with an intent to acquaint him with her necessitous condition, as also with some troubles of her mind: but after she had spoke some few words to him, she was surprised with a fear, and that begot a shortness of breath, so that her spirits and speech failed her; which he perceiving, did so compassionate her, and was so humble, that he took her by the hand, and said, "Speak, good mother; be not afraid to speak to me; for I am a man that will hear you with patience; and will relieve your necessities too, if I be able: and this I will do willingly; and therefore, mother, be not afraid to acquaint me with what you desire." After which comfortable speech, he again took her by the hand, made her sit down by him, and understanding she was of his parish, he told her "He would be acquainted with her, and take her into his care." And having with patience heard and understood her wants—and it is some relief for a poor body to be but heard with patience—he, like a Christian Clergyman, comforted her by his meek behaviour and counsel; but because that cost him nothing, he relieved her with money too, and so sent her home with a cheerful heart, praising God, and praying for him. Thus worthy, and—like David's blessed man—thus lowly, was Mr George Herbert in his own eyes, and thus lovely in the eyes of others.

At his return that night to his wife at Bainton, he gave her an account of the passages betwixt him and the poor woman; with which she was so affected, that she went next day to Salisbury, and there bought a pair of blankets, and sent them as a token of her love to the poor woman; and with them a message, "That she would see and be acquainted with her, when her house was built at Bemerton."

There be many such passages both of him and his wife, of which some few will be related: but I shall first tell, that he hasted to get the Parish-Church repaired; then to beautify the Chapel—which stands near his house—and that at his own great charge. He then proceeded to rebuild the greatest part of the Parsonage-house, which he did also very completely, and at his own charge; and having done this good work, he caused these verses to be writ upon, or engraven in, the mantle of the chimney in his hall.

TO MY SUCCESSOR

If thou chance for to find  
A new house to thy mind,  
And built without thy cost;  
Be good to the poor,  
As God gives thee store,  
And then my labour's not lost.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

1709-1784



## MILTON'S JUVENILE POEMS

In the examination of Milton's poetical works I shall pay so much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he seems to have had a degree of fondness not very laudable: what he has once written he resolves to preserve, and gives to the publick an unfinished poem, which he broke off because he was *nothing satisfied with what he had done*, supposing his readers less nice than himself. These preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and English. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to speak as a critick; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of sentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excell the odes; and some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared.

The English poems, though they make no promises of *Paradise Lost*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence; if they differ from verses of others, they differ for the worse; for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness; the

combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought, and violently applied.

That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques shew how excellence is required; what we hope ever to do with ease, we may learn first to do with diligence.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgement into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill *in dandling the Kid*.

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is, we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon *Arethuse* and *Mincius*, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its

form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting: whatever images it can supply, are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?

We drove a field, and both together heard  
What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a College easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise

is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read Lycidas with pleasure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to show how objects derive their colours from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

The *cheerful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *cheerful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks *not unseen* to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant; thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetick scenes of tragick and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some musick played by aerial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend, or a pleasant companion. The seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

The man of *chearfulness*, having exhausted the country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendor, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson, or the wild dramas of Shakspeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *pensive* man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in musick; but he seems to think that chearful notes would have obtained

from Pluto a compleat dismissal of Eurydice, of whom solemn sounds only procured a conditional release.

For the old age of Chearfulness he makes no provision; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His Chearfulness is without levity, and his Pensiveness without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected, and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the Masque of Comus; in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost*. Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does Comus afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable.



A Masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers; who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless Lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience; a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatick representation, that no precedents can support it.

The discourse of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches: they have not the spriteliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question. The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and

hoped that she is not in danger, the Elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher.

Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and enquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good Being.

In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies, to invite attention, and detain it.

The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.

The Sonnets were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabrick of a sonnet,

however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

## JAMES BOSWELL

1740-1795



### FIRST MEETING WITH DR JOHNSON

Mr Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a book-seller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him: but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extra-

ordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cries Davies, roguishly. "Mr Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expence of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so

remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think, that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking

the questions and observations by which it was produced.

"People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an authour is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

"In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind."

"Sir, this book ('The Elements of Criticism,' which he had taken up,) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical." *untrue*

Speaking of one who with more than ordinary boldness attacked publick measures and the royal family, he said, "I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked."

"The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tedium vitae*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country*, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling."

"Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory.

Ridicule has gone down before him, and, I doubt, Derrick is his enemy.

"Derrick may do very well, as long as he can out-run his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over."

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, "Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from."

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr Johnson would take it as a compliment. So on Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and

I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den"; an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr Blair had been presented to him by Dr James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian, was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr Fordyce, Dr Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson at this time, did not know that Dr Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr Fordyce's having suggested the topick, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book, when the authour is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously: but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown



suit of cloaths looked very rusty: he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir, (said I), I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me."—I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day.

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr Burney.—BURNAY. "How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?" JOHNSON. "It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it." BURNAY. "Perhaps, Sir, that

may be from want of exercise." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the alehouse; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it."

Johnson continued. "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labour; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it.

"The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, 'Verily they have their reward.'"

"The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, in reasoning *à priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius,—Dr Pearson,—and Dr Clarke."

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings: and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

1774-1843

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### NELSON'S BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

Horatio, son of Edmund and Catherine Nelson, was born 29 September, 1758, in the parsonage house of Burnham Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk, of which his father was rector. The maiden name of his mother was Suckling: her grandmother was an elder sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and this child was

named after his godfather, the first Lord Walpole. Mrs Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight, out of eleven, children. Her brother, Capt. Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterwards, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonné*, of sixty-four guns. "Do, William," said he to a brother who was a year and a half older than himself, "write to my father, and tell him that I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice." Mr Nelson was then at Bath, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health: his circumstances were straitened, and he had no prospect of ever seeing them bettered: he knew that it was the wish of providing for himself by which Horatio was chiefly actuated; and did not oppose his resolution: he understood also the boy's character, and had always said, that, in whatever station he might be placed, he would climb, if possible, to the very top of the tree. Accordingly Capt. Suckling was written to. "What," said he in his answer, "has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he, above all the rest, should be sent to rough it out at sea?—But let him come; and the first time we go into action, a cannon ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once."

It is manifest from these words, that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. He was never of a strong body; and the *ague*, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly

reduced his strength; yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him. When a mere child, he strayed a bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy: the dinner hour elapsed; he was absent, and could not be found; and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over. "I wonder, child," said the old lady when she saw him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home."—"Fear! grandmamma," replied the future hero, "I never saw fear:—What is it?" Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return to school, they came back, because there had been a fall of snow; and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them to venture on. "If that be the case," said the father, "you certainly shall not go; but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return: but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour!" The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse; but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. "We must go on," said he: "remember, Brother, it was left to our honour!"—There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which the boys regarded as lawful booty, and in the highest degree tempting;

but the boldest among them were afraid to venture for the prize. Horatio volunteered upon this service: he was lowered down at night from the bedroom window by some sheets, plundered the tree, was drawn up with the pears, and then distributed them among his schoolfellows without reserving any for himself.—“He only took them,” he said, “because every other boy was afraid.”

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham, with the expected summons for Horatio to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bed-fellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonné* was lying in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold, without being able to reach the ship, an officer observed the forlorn appearance of the boy, questioned him, and, happening to be acquainted with his uncle, took him home and gave him some refreshments.—When he got on board, Capt. Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprized of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day, without being noticed by any one; and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, “took compassion on him.” The pain which is felt when we are first transplanted from our native soil, when the living branch

is cut from the parent tree,—is one of the most poignant which we have to endure through life. There are after griefs which wound more deeply, which leave behind them scars never to be effaced, which bruise the spirit, and sometimes break the heart: but never do we feel so keenly the want of love, the necessity of being loved, and the sense of utter desertion, as when we first leave the haven of home, and are, as it were, pushed off upon the stream of life. Added to these feelings, the sea-boy has to endure physical hardships, and the privation of every comfort, even of sleep. Nelson had a feeble body and an affectionate heart, and he remembered through life his first days of wretchedness in the service.

The *Raisonné* having been commissioned on account of the dispute respecting the Falkland Islands, was paid off as soon as the difference with the court of Spain was accommodated, and Capt. Suckling was removed to the *Triumph*, seventy-four, then stationed as a guardship in the Thames. This was considered as too inactive a life for a boy, and Nelson was therefore sent a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant ship, commanded by Mr John Rathbone, an excellent seaman, who had served as master's mate under Capt. Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*. He returned a practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service, and a saying then common among the sailors—"aft the most honour; forward the better man." Rathbone had probably been disappointed and disgusted in the navy; and, with no unfriendly intentions, warned Nelson against a profession which he himself had found hopeless. His uncle received him on board the

Triumph on his return, and discovering his dislike to the navy, took the best means of reconciling him to it. He held it out as a reward, that if he attended well to his navigation, he should go in the cutter and decked long boat, which was attached to the commanding officer's ship at Chatham. Thus he became a good pilot for vessels of that description, from Chatham to the Tower, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland, and acquired a confidence among rocks and sands, of which he often felt the value.

Nelson had not been many months on board the Triumph, when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery toward the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and, by his uncle's interest, he was admitted as coxswain under Capt. Lutwidge, second in voyage was undertaken in compliance with an application from the Royal Society. The Hon. Capt. Constantine John Phipps, eldest son of Lord Mulgrave, volunteered his services. The Racehorse and Carcass bombs were selected, as the strongest ships, and, therefore, best adapted for such a voyage; and they were taken into dock and strengthened, to render them as secure as possible against the ice. Two masters of Greenlandmen were employed as pilots for each ship. No expedition was ever more carefully fitted out; and the first ~~Lord of the Admiralty~~, Lord



Sandwich, with a laudable solicitude, went on board himself, before their departure, to see that every thing had been completed to the wish of the officers. The ships were provided with a simple and excellent apparatus for distilling fresh from salt water, the invention of Dr Irving, who accompanied the expedition. It consisted merely in fitting a tube to the ship's kettle, and applying a wet mop to the surface, as the vapour was passing. By these means, from thirty-four to forty gallons were produced every day.

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June: on the 6th of the following month they were in lat.  $79^{\circ} 56' 39''$ ; long.  $9^{\circ} 43' 30''$  E. The next day, about the place where most of the old discoverers had been stopped, the Racehorse was beset with ice; but they hove her through with ice anchors. Capt. Phipps continued ranging along the ice, northward and westward, till the 24th; he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was in lat.  $80^{\circ} 13'$ ; long.  $18^{\circ} 48'$  E. among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. The weather was exceedingly fine, mild, and unusually clear. Here they were becalmed in a large bay, with three apparent openings between the islands which formed it; but everywhere, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. There was not a breath of air, the water was perfectly smooth, the ice covered with snow, low and even, except a few broken pieces, near the edge; and the pools of water in the middle of the ice-fields just crusted over with young ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to be seen anywhere, except a hole or lake, as it might be called,

of about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay fast to the ice with their ice anchors. From these ice-fields they filled their casks with water, which was very pure and soft. The men were playing on the ice all day; but the Greenland pilots, who were further than they had ever been before, and considered that the season was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset.

The next day there was not the smallest opening, the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. The ice, which the day before had been flat, and almost level with the water's edge, was now in many places forced higher than the mainyard, by the pieces squeezing together. A day of thick fog followed: it was succeeded by clear weather; but the passage by which the ships had entered from the westward was closed, and no open water was in sight, either in that or any other quarter. By the pilots' advice the men were set to cut a passage and warp through the small openings to the westward. They sawed through pieces of ice twelve feet thick; and this labour continued the whole day, during which their utmost efforts did not move the ships above three hundred yards; while they were driven, together with the ice, far to the N.E. and E. by the current. Sometimes a field of several acres square would be lifted up between two larger islands, and incorporated with them; and thus these larger pieces continued to grow by aggregation. Another day passed, and there seemed no probability of getting the ships out, without a strong E. or N.E. wind. The season was far advanced, and every hour

lessened the chance of extricating themselves. Young as he was, Nelson was appointed to command one of the boats which were sent out to explore a passage into the open water. It was the means of saving a boat belonging to the Racehorse from a singular but imminent danger. Some of the officers had fired at and wounded a walrus. As no other animal has so human-like an expression in its countenance, so also is there none that seems to possess more of the passions of humanity. The wounded animal dived immediately, and brought up a number of its companions; and they all joined in an attack upon the boat. They wrested an oar from one of the men; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could prevent them from staving or upsetting her, till the Carcass's boat came up; and the walruses, finding their enemies thus reinforced, dispersed. Young Nelson exposed himself in a more daring manner. One night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set off over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Capt. Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen, at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made: Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain; his musket had flashed in the pan; their ammunition was expended; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. "Never

mind," he cried; "do but let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him." Capt. Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast; and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the consequences of his trespass. The captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. "Sir," said he, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father."

A party were now sent to an island, about twelve miles off (named Walden's Island in the charts, from the midshipman who was intrusted with this service), to see where the open water lay. They came back with information, that the ice, though close all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. They said also, that upon the island they had had a fresh east wind. This intelligence considerably abated the hopes of the crew; for where they lay it had been almost calm, and their main dependence had been upon the effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. There was but one alternative; either to wait the event of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats. The likelihood that it might be necessary to sacrifice the ships had been foreseen; the boats, accordingly, were adapted, both in number and size, to transport, in case of emergency, the whole crew; and there were Dutch whalers upon the coast, in which they could all be conveyed to Europe. As for wintering where they

were, that dreadful experiment had been already tried too often. No time was to be lost; the ships had driven into shoal water, having but fourteen fathoms. Should they, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must inevitably be lost: and at this time they were driving fast toward some rocks on the N.E. Capt. Phipps sent for the officers of both ships, and told them his intention of preparing the boats for going away. They were immediately hoisted out, and the fitting begun. Canvas bread-bags were made, in case it should be necessary suddenly to desert the vessels; and men were sent with the lead and line to the northward and eastward, to sound wherever they found cracks in the ice, that they might have notice before the ice took the ground; for, in that case, the ships must instantly have been crushed, or upset.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of a four-oared cutter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen: they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels; and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. They moved very slowly, and were not now nearly so far to the westward as when they were first beset. However, all sail was kept upon them, to force them through whenever the ice slackened the least. Whatever exertions were made, it could not be possible to get the boats to the water's edge before the 14th; and if the situation of the ships should not alter by that time, it

would not be justifiable to stay longer by them. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through. A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice: they returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields. The ships, however, moved something, and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog, so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th; but the ships were moved a little through some very small openings: the mist cleared off in the afternoon; and it was then perceived that they had driven much more than could have been expected to the westward, and that the ice itself had driven still farther. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up to the N.N.E. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice. They frequently struck, and with such force, that one stroke broke the shank of the *Racehorse's* best bower anchor: but the vessels made way; and by noon they had cleared the ice, and were out at sea. The next day they anchored in Smeerenberg Harbour, close to that island of which the westernmost point is called Hakluyt's Headland, in honour of the great promoter and compiler of our English voyages of discovery.

Here they remained a few days that the men might rest after their fatigue. No insect was to be seen in this dreary country, nor any species of reptile—not

even the common earth-worm. Large bodies of ice, called ice-bergs, filled up the valleys between high mountains, so dark, as, when contrasted with the snow, to appear black. The colour of the ice was a lively light green. Opposite to the place where they fixed their observatory was one of these ice-bergs, above three hundred feet high: its side towards the sea was nearly perpendicular, and a stream of water issued from it. Large pieces frequently broke off, and rolled down into the sea. There was no thunder nor lightning during the whole time they were in these latitudes. The sky was generally loaded with hard white clouds, from which it was never entirely free even in the clearest weather. They always knew when they were approaching the ice, long before they saw it, by a bright appearance near the horizon, which the Greenlandmen called the blink of the ice. The season was now so far advanced, that nothing more could have been attempted, if indeed any thing had been left untried: but the summer had been unusually favourable, and they had carefully surveyed the wall of ice extending for more than twenty degrees between the latitudes of  $80^{\circ}$  and  $81^{\circ}$ , without the smallest appearance of any opening.

The ships were paid off shortly after their return to England; and Nelson was then placed by his uncle with Capt. Farmer, in the *Seahorse*, of twenty guns, then going out to the East Indies in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes.

## IV. TRAVEL

"In that contree" runs one of the first English books of travel "ben many Ipotaynes (*i.e.* hippopotami), that dwellen somtyme in the water and somtyme on the lond: and thei ben half man and half hors, as I have seyde before: and thei eten men when thei may take hem. And there ben ryveres and watres that ben fulle bythere, three sithes more than is the water of the see." *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, the book from which this passage is taken, is a book of imagination, it is true; but it represents fairly enough the tales which travellers into the unknown could tell to the credulous stay-at-homes who had no means of verifying them. Shakespeare speaks of the odd marvels which probably he himself had heard in his wanderings round St Paul's Cathedral:

When we were boys  
Who would believe that there were mountaineers  
Dewlapped like bulls, whose throats had hanging at them  
Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men  
Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find  
Each putter out of five for one<sup>x</sup> will bring us  
Good warrant of.

But the conquest of the sea and the opening up of all such "countrees beyond Cathay" as inspired the imagination of the writer of Mandeville's *Travels* soon rid literature of these picturesque romances. So in this section we begin with a sturdy, fiery-headed, common-sense Englishman of the late eighteenth century who rode horseback up and down the country lanes, studying the fields on either side, praising the farmers and shepherds sometimes, at other times laughing at their stupidity, and always burning with anger against the corruption of the government. He must have been a good, downright man to know—this William Cobbett who learnt more in the little

<sup>x</sup> *I.e.* travellers.



sandy valley below his native Farnham than he could learn at Eton and Oxford put together. His book, *Rural Rides*, has in it the great breath of the open country and the strong undaunted spirit of man. The only work that really resembles it is one that is neglected now, that book of another horseman who travelled up and down England just before Cobbett—John Wesley. His *Journal* is no unworthy companion to Cobbett's *Rides*.

Borrow and Kinglake both belong to the middle of the nineteenth century. *Eothen* is not only Kinglake's masterpiece; it is also a masterpiece of English descriptive prose. Kinglake is just as typical a product, as Cobbett was an opponent, of Eton and Cambridge. In his most famous and beautiful chapter, on crossing the desert, he describes how suddenly in the waste he saw "an English shooting-jacket, and a single servant come listlessly slouching along from out of the forward horizon," and how he stared "at the wide unproportion between this slender company and the boundless plains of sand through which they were keeping their way." The Englishman might be Kinglake himself; the sentence breathes the very spirit of his book.

Borrow is one of the puzzles of literature. Four outstanding books reveal something of his life: *Lavengro* and its sequel *The Romany Rye*, *Wild Wales*, and *The Bible in Spain*. The first—half autobiography and half romance—reveals him as an odd nomadic adventurer, the friend of gypsies and the interpreter of their Romany tongue; its sequel retains the glamour of the gypsy life especially in the chief character (apart from Borrow himself) of the two books—Jasper Petulengro. In *Wild Wales* he finds new adventures and the old eccentric interests in the west; while *The Bible in Spain*, a book full of his queer knowledge of queerer characters, records his travels when he was the representative in Spain of the British and Foreign Bible Society. His prose is often laboured, sometimes arid and dry, especially when he ventures on religious argument; but it awakens to life when he talks of horses, or boxers, or the Romany lore; and even rises to poetry

here and there, especially in that famous passage where Jasper Petulengro sums up his brave and simple philosophy of life:

“Life is sweet, brother.”

“Do you think so?”

“Think so! There’s night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there’s likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?”

Perhaps the writing of travel-books, like letter writing, demands the leisure and quiet of a past age. There is no real classic yet of travel by railway, or motor-car, or aeroplane. Modern travel literature—R. L. Stevenson’s *Travels with a Donkey*, Mr Hilaire Belloc’s *The Path to Rome* and *The Four Men*, and most of Mr H. M. Tomlinson’s books—concerns itself, in the main, with the older, slower means of locomotion. Even for the great adventures on the sea and into the unknown there exists only Captain Scott’s *Journal* in these modern days to remind us of Hakluyt’s *Voyages* and Froude’s *English Seamen*.

## WILLIAM COBBETT

1762–1835

### HIS BOYHOOD SCENES ‘REVISITED

Odiham, Hampshire, Friday, 27 Sept.

FROM Lea we set off this morning about six o’clock to get free-quarter again at a worthy old friend’s at this nice little plain market-town. Our direct road was right over the heath through Tilford to Farnham; but we veered a little to the left after we came to Tilford, at which place on the Green we stopped to look at an *oak tree*, which, when I was a little boy,

was but a very little tree, comparatively, and which is now, take it altogether, by far the finest tree that I ever saw in my life. The stem or shaft is short; that is to say, it is short before you come to the first limbs; but it is full *thirty feet round*, at about eight or ten feet from the ground. Out of the stem there come not less than fifteen or sixteen limbs, many of which are from five to ten feet round, and each of which would, in fact, be considered a decent stick of timber. I am not judge enough of timber to say anything about the quantity in the whole tree, but my son stepped the ground, and as nearly as we could judge, the diameter of the extent of the branches was upwards of ninety feet, which would make a circumference of about three hundred feet. The tree is in full growth at this moment. There is a little hole in one of the limbs; but with that exception, there appears not the smallest sign of decay. The tree has made great shoots in all parts of it this last summer and spring; and there are no appearances of *white* upon the trunk, such as are regarded as the symptoms of full growth. There are many sorts of oak in England; two very distinct; one with a pale leaf, and one with a dark leaf: this is of the pale leaf. The tree stands upon Tilford-green, the soil of which is a light loam with a hard sand stone a good way beneath, and, probably, clay beneath that. The spot where the tree stands is about a hundred and twenty feet from the edge of a little river, and the ground on which it stands may be about ten feet higher than the bed of that river.

In quitting Tilford we came on to the land belonging to Waverly Abbey, and then, instead of

going on to the town of Farnham, veered away to the left towards Wrecklesham, in order to cross the Farnham and Alton turnpike-road, and to come on by the side of Crondall to Odiham. We went a little out of the way to go to a place called the *Bourn*, which lies in the heath at about a mile from Farnham. It is a winding narrow valley, down which, during the wet season of the year, there runs a stream beginning at the *Holt Forest*, and emptying itself into the *Wey* just below Moor-Park, which was the seat of Sir William Temple when Swift was residing with him. We went to this Bourn in order that I might show my son the spot where I received the rudiments of my education. There is a little hop-garden in which I used to work when from eight to ten years old; from which I have scores of times run to follow the hounds, leaving the hoe to do the best that it could to destroy the weeds; but the most interesting thing was a *sand-hill*, which goes from a part of the heath down to the rivulet. As a due mixture of pleasure with toil, I, with two brothers, used occasionally to *desport* ourselves, as the lawyers call it, at this sand-hill. Our diversion was this: we used to go to the top of the hill, which was steeper than the roof of a house; one used to draw his arms out of the sleeves of his smock-frock, and lay himself down with his arms by his sides; and then the others, one at head and the other at feet, sent him rolling down the hill like a barrel or a log of wood. By the time he got to the bottom his hair, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, were all full of this loose sand; then the others took their turn, and at every roll there was a monstrous spell of laughter. I had often

told my sons of this while they were very little, and I now took one of them to see the spot. But that was not all. This was the spot where I was receiving my *education*; and this was the sort of education; and I am perfectly satisfied that if I had not received such an education, or something very much like it; that, if I had been brought up a milksop, with a nursery-maid everlastingly at my heels, I should have been at this day as great a fool, as inefficient a mortal, as any of those frivolous idiots that are turned out from Winchester and Westminster Schools, or from any of those dens of dunces called Colleges and Universities. It is impossible to say how much I owe to that sand-hill; and I went to return it my thanks for the ability which it probably gave me to be one of the greatest terrors, to one of the greatest and most powerful bodies of knaves and fools, that ever were permitted to afflict this or any other country.

From the Bourn we proceeded on to Wrecklesham, at the end of which we crossed what is called the river Wey. Here we found a parcel of labourers at parish-work. Amongst them was an old playmate of mine. The account they gave of their situation was very dismal. The harvest was over early. The hop-picking is now over; and now they are employed *by the Parish*; that is to say, not absolutely digging holes one day and filling them up the next; but at the expense of half-ruined farmers and tradesmen and landlords, to break stones into very small pieces to make nice smooth roads lest the jolting, in going along them, should create bile in the stomachs of the overfed tax-eaters. I call upon mankind to witness this scene;

and to say, whether ever the like of this was heard of before. It is a state of things, where all is out of order; where self-preservation, that great law of nature, seems to be set at defiance; for here are farmers *unable* to pay men for working for them, and yet compelled to pay them for working in doing that which is really of no use to any human being. There lie the hop-poles, unstripped. You see a hundred things in the neighbouring fields that want doing. The fences are not nearly what they ought to be. The very meadows, to our right and our left in crossing this little valley, would occupy these men advantageously until the setting in of the frost; and here are they, not, as I said before, actually digging holes one day and filling them up the next; but, to all intents and purposes, as uselessly employed. Is this Mr Canning's "*Sun of Prosperity*?" Is this the way to increase or preserve a nation's wealth? Is this a sign of wise legislation and of good government? Does this thing "work well," Mr Canning? Does it prove that we want no change? True, you were born under a Kingly Government; and so was I as well as you; but I was not born under *Six-Acts*; nor was I born under a state of things like this. I was not born under it, and I do not wish to live under it; and, with God's help, I will change it if I can.

We left these poor fellows, after having given them, not "religious Tracts," which would, if they could, make the labourer content with half starvation, but something to get them some bread and cheese and beer, being firmly convinced that it is the body that wants filling and not the mind. However, in

speaking of their low wages, I told them that the farmers and hop-planters were as much objects of compassion as themselves, which they acknowledged.

We immediately, after this, crossed the road, and went on towards Crondall upon a soil that soon became stiff loam and flint at top with a bed of chalk beneath. We did not go to Crondall; but kept along over Slade Heath, and through a very pretty place called Well. We arrived at Odiham about half after eleven, at the end of a beautiful ride of about seventeen miles, in a very fine and pleasant day.

Winchester, Saturday, 28 *Sept.*

Just after daylight we started for this place. By the turn-pike we could have come through Basingstoke by turning off to the right, or through Alton and Alresford by turning off to the left. Being naturally disposed towards a middle course, we chose to wind down through Upton-Gray, Preston-Candover, Chilton-Candover, Brown-Candover, then down to Odiham, and into Winchester by the north entrance. From Wrecklesham to Winchester we have come over roads and lanes of flint and chalk. The weather being dry again, the ground under you, as solid as iron, makes a great rattling with the horses' feet. The country where the soil is stiff loam upon chalk is never bad for corn. Not rich, but never poor. There is at no time anything deserving to be called dirt in the roads. The buildings last a long time, from the absence of fogs and also the absence of humidity in the ground. The absence of dirt makes the people habitually cleanly; and all along through this country the people

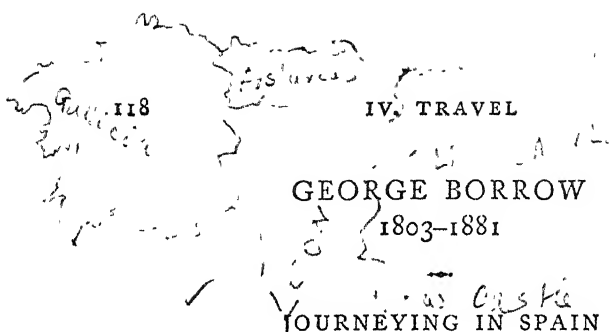
appear in general to be very neat. It is a country for sheep, which are always sound and good upon this iron soil. The trees grow well, where there are trees. The woods and coppices are not numerous; but they are good, particularly the ash, which always grows well upon the chalk. The oaks, though they do not grow in the spiral form, as upon the clays, are by no means stunted; and some of them very fine trees; I take it that they require a much greater number of years to bring them to perfection than in the *Wealds*. The wood, perhaps, may be harder; but I have heard that the oak, which grows upon these hard bottoms, is very frequently what the carpenters call *shaky*. The underwoods here consist, almost entirely, of hazle, which is very fine, and much tougher and more durable than that which grows on soils with a moist bottom. This hazle is a thing of great utility here. It furnishes rods wherewith to make fences; but its principal use is, to make *wattles* for the folding of sheep in the fields. These things are made much more neatly here than in the south of Hampshire and in Sussex, or in any other part that I have seen. Chalk is the favourite soil of the *yew-tree*; and at Preston-Candover there is an avenue of yew-trees, probably a mile long, each tree containing, as nearly as I can guess, from twelve to twenty feet of timber, which, as the reader knows, implies a tree of considerable size. They have probably been a century or two in growing; but, in any way that timber can be used, the timber of the yew will last, perhaps, ten times as long as the timber of any other tree that we grow in England.



Quitting the Candovers, we came along between the two estates of the two Barings. Sir Thomas, who has supplanted the Duke of Bedford, was to our right, while Alexander, who has supplanted Lord Northington, was on our left. The latter has enclosed, as a sort of outwork to his park, a pretty little down called Northington Down, in which he has planted, here and there, a clump of trees. But Mr Baring, not reflecting that woods are not like funds, to be made at a heat, has planted his trees *too large*; so that they are covered with moss, are dying at the top, and are literally growing downward instead of upward. In short, this enclosure and plantation have totally destroyed the beauty of this part of the estate. The down, which was before very beautiful, and formed a sort of *glacis* up to the park pales, is now a marred, ragged, ugly-looking thing. The dying trees, which have been planted long enough for you not to perceive that they have been planted, excite the idea of sterility in the soil. They do injustice to it; for, as a down, it was excellent. Everything that has been done here is to the injury of the estate, and discovers a most shocking want of taste in the projector. Sir Thomas's plantations, or, rather those of his father, have been managed more judiciously.

I do not like to be a sort of spy in a man's neighbourhood; but I will tell Sir Thomas Baring what I have heard; and if he be a man of sense I shall have his thanks, rather than his reproaches, for so doing. I may have been misinformed; but this is what I have heard, that he, and also Lady Baring, are very charitable; that they are very kind and compassionate to

their poor neighbours; but that they tack a sort of condition to this charity; that they insist upon the objects of it adopting their notions with regard to religion; or, at least, that where the people are not what they deem *pious*, they are not objects of their benevolence. I do not say, that they are not perfectly sincere themselves, and that their wishes are not the best that can possibly be; but of this I am very certain, that, by pursuing this principle of action, where they make one good man or woman, they will make one hundred hypocrites. It is not little books that can make a people good; that can make them moral; that can restrain them from committing crimes. I believe that books of any sort never yet had that tendency. Sir Thomas does, I dare say, think me a very wicked man, since I aim at the destruction of the funding system, and what he would call a robbery of what he calls the public creditor; and yet, God help me, I have read books enough, and amongst the rest, a great part of the religious tracts. Amongst the labouring people, the first thing you have to look after is, *common honesty, speaking the truth, and refraining from thieving*; and to secure these, the labourer must have *his belly-full* and be *free from fear*; and this belly-full must come to him from out of his *wages*, and not from benevolence of any description. Such being my opinion, I think Sir Thomas Baring would do better, that he would discover more real benevolence, by using the influence which he must naturally have in his neighbourhood, to prevent a diminution in the wages of labour.



From Corcuvion I returned to Saint James and Coruña, and now began to make preparation for directing my course to the Asturias. In the first place I parted with my Andalusian horse, which I considered unfit for the long and mountainous journey I was about to undertake; his constitution having become much debilitated from his Gallegan travels. Owing to horses being exceedingly scarce at Coruña, I had no difficulty in disposing of him at a far higher price than he originally cost me. A young and wealthy merchant of Coruña, who was a national guardsman, became enamoured of his glossy skin and long mane and tail. For my own part, I was glad to part with him for more reasons than one; he was both vicious and savage, and was continually getting me into scrapes in the stables of the posadas where we slept or baited. An old Castilian peasant, whose pony he had maltreated, once said to me, "Sir Cavalier, if you have any love or respect for yourself, get rid I beseech you of that beast, who is capable of proving the ruin of a kingdom." So I left him behind at Coruña, where I subsequently learned that he became glandered and died. Peace to his memory!

From Coruña I crossed the bay to Ferrol, whilst Antonio with our remaining horse followed by land,

a rather toilsome and circuitous journey, although the distance by water is scarcely three leagues. I was very sea-sick during the passage, and lay almost senseless at the bottom of the small launch in which I had embarked, and which was crowded with people. The wind was adverse, and the water rough. We could make no sail, but were impelled along by the oars of five or six stout mariners, who sang all the while Gallegan ditties. Suddenly the sea appeared to have become quite smooth, and my sickness at once deserted me. I rose upon my feet and looked around. We were in one of the strangest places imaginable. A long and narrow passage overhung on either side by a stupendous barrier of black and threatening rocks. The line of the coast was here divided by a natural cleft, yet so straight and regular that it seemed not the work of chance but design. The water was dark and sullen, and of immense depth. This passage, which is about a mile in length, is the entrance to a broad basin, at whose farther extremity stands the town of Ferrol.

Sadness came upon me as soon as I entered this place. Grass was growing in the streets, and misery and distress stared me in the face on every side. Ferrol is the grand naval arsenal of Spain, and has shared in the ruin of the once splendid Spanish navy: it is no longer thronged with those thousand shipwrights who prepared for sea the tremendous three-deckers and long frigates, the greater part of which were destroyed at Trafalgar. Only a few ill paid and half-starved workmen still linger about, scarcely sufficient to repair any guarda costa which may put in dismantled

by the fire of some English smuggling schooner from Gibraltar. Half the inhabitants of Ferrol beg their bread; and amongst these, as it is said, are not unfrequently found retired naval officers, many of them maimed or otherwise wounded, who are left to pine in indigence; their pensions or salaries having been allowed to run three or four years in arrear, owing to the exigencies of the times. A crowd of importunate beggars followed me to the posada, and even attempted to penetrate to the apartment to which I was conducted. "Who are you?" said I to a woman who flung herself at my feet, and who bore in her countenance evident marks of former gentility. "A widow, sir," she replied, in very good French; "a widow of a brave officer, once admiral of this port." The misery and degradation of modern Spain are nowhere so strikingly manifested as at Ferrol.

Yet even here there is still much to admire. Notwithstanding its present state of desolation, it contains some good streets, and abounds with handsome houses. The alameda is planted with nearly a thousand elms, of which almost all are magnificent trees, and the poor Ferrolese, with the genuine spirit of localism so prevalent in Spain, boast that their town contains a better public walk than Madrid, of whose prado, when they compare the two, they speak in terms of unmitigated contempt. At one end of this alameda stands the church, the only one in Ferrol. To this church I repaired the day after my arrival, which was Sunday. I found it quite insufficient to contain the number of worshippers who, chiefly from the country, not only crowded the interior, but, bare-headed, were

upon their knees before the door to a considerable distance down the walk.

Parallel with the alameda extends the wall of the naval arsenal and dock. I spent several hours in walking about these places, to visit which it is necessary to procure a written permission from the captain-general of Ferrol. They filled me with astonishment. I have seen the royal dock-yards of Russia and England, but for grandeur of design and costliness of execution, they cannot for a moment compare with these wonderful monuments of the bygone naval pomp of Spain. I shall not attempt to describe them, but content myself with observing, that the oblong basin, which is surrounded with a granite mole, is capacious enough to permit a hundred first-rates to lie conveniently in ordinary: but instead of such a force, I saw only a sixty-gun frigate and two brigs lying in this basin, and to this inconsiderable number of vessels is the present war marine of Spain reduced.

I waited for the arrival of Antonio two or three days at Ferrol, and still he came not: late one evening, however, as I was looking down the street, I perceived him advancing, leading our only horse by the bridle. He informed me that, at about three leagues from Coruña, the heat of the weather and the flies had so distressed the animal that it had fallen down in a kind of fit, from which it had been only relieved by copious bleeding, on which account he had been compelled to halt for a day upon the road. The horse was evidently in a very feeble state; and had a strange rattling in its throat, which alarmed me at first. I however adminis-

tered some remedies, and in a few days deemed him sufficiently recovered to proceed.

We accordingly started from Ferrol; having first hired a pony for myself, and a guide who was to attend us as far as Rivadeo, twenty leagues from Ferrol, and on the confines of the Asturias. The day at first was fine, but ere we reached Novales, a distance of three leagues, the sky became overcast, and a mist descended, accompanied by a drizzling rain. The country through which we passed was very picturesque. At about two in the afternoon we could descry through the mist the small fishing town of Santa Marta on our left, with its beautiful bay. Travelling along the summit of a line of hills, we presently entered a chestnut forest, which appeared to be without limit: the rain still descended, and kept up a ceaseless pattering among the broad green leaves. "This is the commencement of the autumnal rains," said the guide. "Many is the wetting that you will get, my masters, before you reach Oviedo." "Have you ever been as far as Oviedo?" I demanded. "No," he replied, "and once only to Rivadeo, the place to which I am now conducting you, and I tell you frankly that we shall soon be in wildernesses where the way is hard to find, especially at night, and amidst rain and waters. I wish I were fairly back to Ferrol, for I like not this route, which is the worst in Galicia, in more respects than one; but where my master's pony goes, there must I go too; such is the life of us guides." I shrugged my shoulders at this intelligence, which was by no means cheering, but made no answer. At length, about nightfall, we emerged from the forest,

and presently descended into a deep valley at the foot of lofty hills.

"Where are we now?" I demanded of the guide, as we crossed a rude bridge at the bottom of the valley, down which a rivulet swollen by the rain foamed and roared. "In the valley of Coisa doiro," he replied; "and it is my advice that we stay here for the night, and do not venture among those hills, through which lies the path to Viveiro; for as soon as we get there, adios! I shall be bewildered, which will prove the destruction of us all." "Is there a village nigh?" "Yes, the village is right before us, and we shall be there in a moment." We soon reached the village, which stood amongst some tall trees at the entrance of a pass which led up amongst the hills. Antonio dismounted and entered two or three of the cabins, but presently came to me, saying, "We cannot stay here, mon maître, without being devoured by vermin; we had better be amongst the hills than in this place; there is neither fire nor light in these cabins, and the rain is streaming through the roofs." The guide, however, refused to proceed; "I could scarcely find my way amongst the hills by daylight," he cried, surlily, "much less at night, 'midst storm and *bretima*." We procured some wine and maize bread from one of the cottages. Whilst we were partaking of these, Antonio said, "Mon maître, the best thing we can do in our present situation, is to hire some fellow of this village to conduct us through the hills to Viveiro. There are no beds in this place, and if we lie down in the litter in our damp clothes we shall catch a tertian of Galicia. Our present guide is of no



service, we must therefore find another to do his duty." Without waiting for a reply, he flung down the crust of broa which he was munching and disappeared. I subsequently learned that he went to the cottage of the alcalde, and demanded, in the Queen's name, a guide for the Greek ambassador, who was benighted on his way to the Asturias. In about ten minutes I again saw him, attended by the local functionary, who, to my surprise, made me a profound bow, and stood bareheaded in the rain. "His excellency," shouted Antonio, "is in need of a guide to Viveiro. People of our description are not compelled to pay for any service which they may require; however, as his excellency has bowels of compassion, he is willing to give three pesetas to any competent person who will accompany him to Viveiro, and as much bread and wine as he can eat and drink on his arrival." "His excellency shall be served," said the alcalde; "however, as the way is long and the path is bad, and there is much *bretima* amongst the hills, it appears to me that, besides the bread and wine, his excellency can do no less than offer four pesetas to the guide who may be willing to accompany him to Viveiro; and I know no one better than my own son-in-law, Juanito." "Content, señor alcalde," I replied; "produce the guide, and the extra peseta shall be forthcoming in due season."

Soon appeared Juanito with a lantern in his hand. We instantly set forward. The two guides began conversing in Gallegan. "Mon maître," said Antonio, "this new scoundrel is asking the old one what he thinks we have got in our portmanteaus." Then,

without awaiting my answer, he shouted, "Pistols, ye barbarians! Pistols, as you shall learn to your cost, if you do not cease speaking in that gibberish and converse in Castilian." The Gallegans were silent, and presently the first guide dropped behind, whilst the other with the lantern moved before. "Keep in the rear," said Antonio to the former, "and at a distance: know one thing moreover, that I can see behind as well as before. *Mon maître*," said he to me, "I don't suppose these fellows will attempt to do us any harm, more especially as they do not know each other; it is well, however, to separate them, for this is a time and place which might tempt any one to commit robbery and murder too."

The rain still continued to fall uninterruptedly, the path was rugged and precipitous, and the night was so dark that we could only see indistinctly the hills which surrounded us. Once or twice our guide seemed to have lost his way: he stopped, muttered to himself, raised his lantern on high, and would then walk slowly and hesitatingly forward. In this manner we proceeded for three or four hours, when I asked the guide how far we were from Viveiro. "I do not know exactly where we are, your worship," he replied, "though I believe we are in the route. We can scarcely, however, be less than two mad leagues from Viveiro." "Then we shall not arrive there before morning," interrupted Antonio, "for a mad league of Galicia means at least two of Castile; and perhaps we are doomed never to arrive there, if the way thither leads down this precipice." As he spoke, the guide seemed to descend into the bowels of the earth.

"Stop," said I, "where are you going?" "To Viveiro, Senhor," replied the fellow; "this is the way to Viveiro, there is no other; I now know where we are." The light of the lantern shone upon the dark ~~red~~ features of the guide, who had turned round to reply, as he stood some yards down the side of a dingle or ravine overgrown with thick trees, beneath whose leafy branches a frightfully steep path descended. I dismounted from the pony, and delivering the bridle to the other guide, said, "Here is your master's horse, if you please you may lead him down that abyss, but as for myself I wash my hands of the matter." The fellow, without a word of reply, vaulted into the saddle, and with a *vamos, Perico!* to the pony, impelled the creature to the descent. "Come, Senhor," said he with the lantern, "there is no time to be lost, my light will be presently extinguished, and this is the worst bit in the whole road." I thought it very probable that he was about to lead us to some den of cut-throats, where we might be sacrificed; but, taking courage, I seized our own horse by the bridle, and followed the fellow down the ravine amidst rocks and brambles. The descent lasted nearly ten minutes, and ere we had entirely accomplished it, the light in the lantern went out, and we remained in nearly total darkness.

Encouraged, however, by the guide, who assured us there was no danger, we at length reached the bottom of the ravine; here we encountered a rill of water, through which we were compelled to wade as high as the knee. In the midst of the water I looked up and caught a glimpse of the heavens through the

branches of the trees, which all around clothed the shelving sides of the ravine and completely embowered the channel of the stream: to a place more strange and replete with gloom and horror no benighted traveller ever found his way. After a short pause we commenced scaling the opposite bank, which we did not find so steep as the other, and a few minutes' exertion brought us to the top.

Shortly afterwards the rain abated, and the moon arising cast a dim light through the watery mists; the way had become less precipitous, and in about two hours we descended to the shore of an extensive creek, along which we proceeded till we reached a spot where many boats and barges lay with their keels upward upon the sand. Presently we beheld before us the walls of Viveiro, upon which the moon was shedding its sickly lustre. We entered by a lofty and seemingly ruinous archway, and the guide conducted us at once to the posada.

Every person in Viveiro appeared to be buried in profound slumber; not so much as a dog saluted us with his bark. After much knocking we were admitted into the posada, a large and dilapidated edifice. We had scarcely housed ourselves and horses when the rain began to fall with yet more violence than before, attended with much thunder and lightning. Antonio and I, exhausted with fatigue, betook ourselves to flock beds in a ruinous chamber, into which the rain penetrated through many a cranny, whilst the guides ate bread and drank wine till the morning.

When I arose I was gladdened by the sight of a fine day. Antonio forthwith prepared a savoury

breakfast of stewed fowl, of which we stood in much need after the ten league journey of the preceding day over the ways which I have attempted to describe. I then walked out to view the town, which consists of little more than one long street, on the side of a steep mountain thickly clad with forests and fruit trees. At about ten we continued our journey, accompanied by our first guide, the other having returned to Coisa doiro some hours previously.

Our route throughout this day was almost constantly within sight of the shores of the Cantabrian sea, whose windings we followed. The country was barren, and in many parts covered with huge stones: cultivated spots, however, were to be seen, where vines were growing. We met with but few human habitations. We however journeyed on cheerfully, for the sun was once more shining in full brightness, gilding the wild moors, and shining upon the waters of the distant sea, which lay in unruffled calmness.

At evening fall we were in the neighbourhood of the shore, with a range of wood-covered hills on our right. Our guide led us towards a creek bordered by a marsh, but he soon stopped and declared that he did not know whither he was conducting us.

"Mon maître," said Antonio, "let us be our own guides; it is, as you see, of no use to depend upon this fellow, whose whole science consists in leading people into quagmires."

He therefore turned aside and proceeded along the marsh for a considerable distance, till we reached a narrow path which led us into a thick wood, where we soon became completely bewildered. On a sudden,

after wandering about a considerable time, we heard the noise of water, and presently the clack of a wheel. Following the sound, we arrived at a low stone mill, built over a brook; here we stopped and shouted, but no answer was returned. "The place is deserted," said Antonio; "here, however, is a path, which, if we follow it, will doubtless lead us to some human habitation." So we went along the path, which, in about ten minutes, brought us to the door of a cabin, in which we saw lights. Antonio dismounted and opened the door: "Is there any one here who can conduct us to Rivadeo?" he demanded.

"Senhor," answered a voice, "Rivadeo is more than five leagues from here, and, moreover, there is a river to cross!"

"Then to the next village," continued Antonio.

"I am a vecino of the next village, which is on the way to Rivadeo," said another voice, "and I will lead you thither, if you will give me fair words, and, what is better, fair money."

A man now came forth, holding in his hand a large stick. He strode sturdily before us, and in less than half an hour led us out of the wood. In another half hour he brought us to a group of cabins situated near the sea; he pointed to one of these, and having received a peseta, bade us farewell.

The people of the cottage willingly consented to receive us for the night: it was much more cleanly and commodious than the wretched huts of the Gallegan peasantry in general. The ground floor consisted of a keeping room and stable, whilst above was a long loft, in which were some neat and comfortable flock

beds. I observed several masts and sails of boats. The family consisted of two brothers with their wives and families; one was a fisherman, but the other, who appeared to be the principal person, informed me that he had resided for many years in service at Madrid, and having amassed a small sum, he had at length returned to his native village, where he had purchased some land which he farmed. All the family used the Castilian language in their common discourse, and on inquiry I learned that the Gallegan was not much spoken in that neighbourhood. I have forgotten the name of this village, which is situated on the estuary of the Foz, which rolls down from Mondonedo. In the morning we crossed this estuary in a large boat with our horses, and about noon arrived at Rivadeo.

"Now, your worship," said the guide who had accompanied us from Ferrol, "I have brought you as far as I bargained, and a hard journey it has been; I therefore hope you will suffer Perico and myself to remain here to-night at your expense, and to-morrow we will go back; at present we are both sorely tired."

"I never mounted a better pony than Perico," said I, "and never met with a worse guide than yourself. You appear to be perfectly ignorant of the country, and have done nothing but bring us into difficulties. You may, however, stay here for the night, as you say you are tired, and to-morrow you may return to Ferrol, where I counsel you to adopt some other trade." This was said at the door of the posada of Rivadeo.

"Shall I lead the horses to a stable?" said the fellow.

"As you please," said I.

Antonio looked after him for a moment, as he was leading the animals away, and then shaking his head followed slowly after. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, laden with the furniture of our own horse, and with a smile upon his countenance: "Mon maître," said he, "I have throughout the journey had a bad opinion of this fellow, and now I have detected him: his motive in requesting permission to stay, was a desire to purloin something from us. He was very officious in the stable about our horse, and I now miss the new leathern girth which secured the saddle, and which I observed him looking at frequently on the road. He has by this time doubtless hid it somewhere; we are quite secure of him, however, for he has not yet received the hire for the pony, nor the gratuity for himself."

The guide returned just as he had concluded speaking. Dishonesty is always suspicious. The fellow cast a glance upon us, and probably beholding in our countenances something which he did not like, he suddenly said, "Give me the horse-hire and my own propina, for Perico and I wish to be off instantly."

"How is this?" said I; "I thought you and Perico were both fatigued, and wished to rest here for the night; you have soon recovered from your weariness."

"I have thought over the matter," said the fellow, "and my master will be angry if I loiter here: pay us, therefore, and let us go."

"Certainly," said I, "if you wish it. Is the horse furniture all right?"



"Quite so," said he; "I delivered it all to your servant."

"It is all here," said Antonio, "with the exception of the leathern girth."

"I have not got it," said the guide.

"Of course not," said I. "Let us proceed to the stable, we shall perhaps find it there."

To the stable we went, which we searched through: no girth, however, was forthcoming. "He has got it buckled round his middle beneath his pantaloons, *mon maître*," said Antonio, whose eyes were moving about like those of a lynx; "I saw the protuberance as he stooped down. However, let us take no notice: he is here surrounded by his countrymen, who, if we were to seize him, might perhaps take his part. As I said before, he is in our power, as we have not paid him."

The fellow now began to talk in Gallegan to the bystanders (several persons having collected) wishing the Denho to take him if he knew anything of the missing property. Nobody, however, seemed inclined to take his part; and those who listened, only shrugged their shoulders. We returned to the portal of the posada, the fellow following us, clamouring for the horse-hire and *propina*. We made him no answer, and at length he went away, threatening to apply to the justicia; in about ten minutes, however, he came running back with the girth in his hand: "I have just found it," said he, "in the street: your servant dropped it."

I took the leather and proceeded very deliberately to count out the sum to which the horse-hire amounted,

and having delivered it to him in the presence of witnesses, I said, "During the whole journey you have been of no service to us whatever; nevertheless, you have fared like ourselves, and have had all you could desire to eat and drink. I intended, on your leaving us, to present you, moreover, with a propina of two dollars; but since, notwithstanding our kind treatment, you endeavoured to pillage us, I will not give you a cuarto: go, therefore, about your business."

All the audience expressed their satisfaction at this sentence, and told him that he had been rightly served, and that he was a disgrace to Galicia. Two or three women crossed themselves, and asked him if he was not afraid that the Denho, whom he had invoked, would take him away. At last, a respectable looking man said to him: "Are you not ashamed to have attempted to rob two innocent strangers?"

"Strangers!" roared the fellow, who was by this time foaming with rage; "innocent strangers, car-racho! they know more of Spain and Galicia too than the whole of us. Oh, Denho, that servant is no man but a wizard, a nuyeiro.—Where is Perico?"

He mounted Perico, and proceeded forthwith to another posada. The tale, however, of his dishonesty had gone before him, and no person would house him; whereupon he returned on his steps, and seeing me looking out of the window of the house, he gave a savage shout, and shaking his fist at me, galloped out of the town, the people pursuing him with hootings and revilings.

## TURKISH TRAVELLING

In two or three hours our party was ready; the servants, the Tatar, the mounted Suridgées, and the baggage-horses altogether made up a strong cavalcade. The accomplished Mysseri, of whom you have heard me speak so often, and who served me so faithfully throughout my Oriental journeys, acted as our interpreter, and was, in fact, the brain of our corps. The Tatar, you know, is a government courier properly employed in carrying dispatches, but also sent with travellers to speed them on their way and answer with his head for their safety. The man whose head was thus pledged for our precious lives was a glorious-looking fellow, with that regular and handsome cast of countenance which is now characteristic of the Ottoman race. His features displayed a good deal of serene pride, self-respect, fortitude, a kind of ingenuous sensuality, and something of instinctive wisdom, without any sharpness of intellect. He had been a Janissary (as I afterwards found), and he still kept up the old pretorian strut which used to affright the Christians in former times—a strut so comically pompous that any close imitation of it, even in the broadest farce, would be looked upon as a very rough over-acting of the character. It is occasioned in part by dress and accoutrements. The weighty

bundle of weapons carried upon the chest throws back the body so as to give it a wonderful portliness, and moreover, the immense masses of clothes that swathe his limbs force the wearer in walking to swing himself heavily round from left to right, and from right to left. In truth, this great edifice of woollen, and cotton, and silk, and silver, and brass, and steel is not at all fitted for moving on foot—it cannot even walk without frightfully discomposing its fair proportions; and as to running—our Tatar ran once (it was in order to pick up a partridge that Methley had winged with a pistol-shot), and the attempt was one of the funniest misdirections of human energy that wondering man ever saw. But put him in his stirrups, and then is the Tatar himself again: there he lives at his pleasure, reposing in the tranquillity of that true home (the home of his ancestors) which the saddle seems to afford him, and drawing from his pipe the calm pleasures of his “own fireside”; or else dashing sudden over the earth, as though for a moment he felt the mouth of a Turcoman steed, and saw his own Scythian plains lying boundless and open before him.

It was not till his subordinates had nearly completed their preparations for the march that our Tatar, “commanding the forces,” arrived; he came sleek and fresh from the bath (for so is the custom of the Ottomans when they start upon a journey), and was carefully accoutred at every point. From his thigh to his throat he was laden with arms and other implements of a campaigning life. There is no scarcity of water along the whole road from Belgrade to Stamboul,

but the habits of our Tatar were formed by his ancestors and not by himself, so he took good care to see that his leathern water-flask was amply charged and properly strapped to the saddle along with his blessed tchibouque. And now, at last he has cursed the Suridgees, in all proper figures of speech, and is ready for a ride of a thousand miles; but before he comforts his soul in the marble baths of Stamboul he will be another and a lesser man—his sense of responsibility, his too strict abstemiousness, and his restless energy, disdainful of sleep, will have worn him down to a fraction of the sleek Moostapha who now leads out our party from the gates of Belgrade.

The Suridgees are the men employed to lead the baggage-horses. They are most of them Gipsies. Their lot is a sad one: they are the <sup>most unfortunate</sup> last of the human race, and all the sins of their superiors (including the horses) can safely be visited on them. But the wretched look often more picturesque than their betters; and though all the world despise these poor Suridgees, their tawny skins and their grisly beards will gain them honourable standing in the foreground of a landscape. We had a couple of these fellows with us, each leading a baggage-horse, to the tail of which last another baggage-horse was attached. There was a world of trouble in persuading the stiff, angular portmanteaus of Europe to adapt themselves to their new condition and sit quietly on pack-saddles, but all was right at last, and it gladdened my eyes to see our little troop file off through the winding lanes of the city, and show down brightly in the plain beneath. The one of our party most out of keeping with the

## TURKISH TRAVELLING.

rest of the scene was Methley's Yorkshire servant, who always rode doggedly on in his pantry jacket, looking out for "gentlemen's seats."

Methley and I had English saddles, but I think we should have done just as well (I should certainly have seen more of the country) if we had adopted saddles like that of our Tatar, who towered so loftily over the scraggy little beast that carried him. In taking thought for the East, whilst in England, I had made one capital bit which you must not forget—I had brought with me a pair of conspicuous spurs; these were a great comfort to me throughout my horseback travels, by keeping up the cheerfulness of the many unhappy nags that I had to bestride. The angle of the Oriental stirrup is a very poor substitute for spurs.

The Ottoman horseman, raised by his saddle to a great height above the humble level of the back that he bestrides, and using a very sharp bit, is able to lift the crest of his nag, and force him into a strangely fast shuffling walk, the orthodox pace for the journey. My comrade and I, using English saddles, could not easily keep our beasts up to this peculiar amble; besides, we thought it a bore to be followed by our attendants for a thousand miles, and we generally, therefore, did duty as the rear guard of our "grand army!" We used to walk our horses till the party in front had got into the distance, and then retrieve the lost ground by a gallop.

We had ridden on for some two or three hours—the stir and bustle of our commencing journey had ceased—the liveliness of our little troop had worn off

with the declining day, and the night closed in as we entered the great Servian forest. Through this our road was to last for more than a hundred miles. Endless and endless now on either side the tall oaks closed in their ranks, and stood gloomily lowering over us, as grim as an army of giants with a thousand years' pay in arrear. One strived, with listening ear, to catch some tidings of that Forest World within—some stirring of beasts, some night bird's scream; but all was quite hushed, except the voice of the cicalas that peopled every bough, and filled the depths of the forest through and through with one same hum everlasting—more stilling than very silence.

At first our way was in darkness, but after a while the moon got up, and touched the glittering arms and tawny faces of our men with light so pale and mystic that the watchful Tatar felt bound to look out for demons, and take proper means for keeping them off. Forthwith he determined that the duty of frightening away our ghostly enemies (like every other troublesome work) should fall upon the poor Suridgees; they accordingly lifted up their voices, and burst upon the dreaded stillness of the forest with shrieks and dismal howls. These precautions were kept up incessantly, and were followed by the most complete success, for not one demon came near us.

Long before midnight we reached the hamlet in which we were to rest for the night; it was made up of about a dozen clay huts standing upon a small tract of ground hardly won from the forest. The peasants living there spoke a Slavonic dialect, and Mysseri's knowledge of the Russian tongue enabled

him to talk with them freely. We took up our quarters in a square room with white walls and an earthen floor, quite bare of furniture and utterly void of women. They told us, however, that these Servian villagers lived in happy abundance, but that they were careful to conceal their riches as well as their wives.

The burdens unstrapped from the pack-saddles very quickly furnished our den: a couple of quilts spread upon the floor, with a carpet-bag at the head of each, became capital sofas—portmanteaus, and hat-boxes, and writing-cases, and books, and maps, and gleaming arms soon lay strewed around us in pleasant confusion. Mysseri's canteen, too, began to yield up its treasures, but we relied upon finding some provisions in the village. At first the natives declared that their hens were mere old maids, and all their cows unmarried; but our Tatar swore such a grand sonorous oath, and fingered the hilt of his kataghu with such persuasive touch, that the land soon flowed with milk, and mountains of eggs arose.

And soon there was tea before us, with all its welcome fragrance. And as we reclined on the floor we found that a portmanteau was just the right height for a table; the duty of candlesticks was ably performed by a couple of intelligent natives; the rest of the villagers stood by the open doorway at the lower end of the room, and watched our banquet with grave and devout attention.

The first night of your first campaign (though you be but a mere peaceful campaigner) is a glorious time in your life. It is so sweet to find oneself free



from the stale civilization of Europe! O my dear ally, when first you spread your carpet in the midst of these Eastern scenes, do think for a moment of those your fellow-creatures that dwell in squares, and streets, and even (for such is the fate of many!) in actual country houses; think of the people that are "presenting their compliments," and "requesting the honour," and "much regretting"—of those that are pinioned at dinner tables, or stuck up in ball-rooms, or cruelly planted in pews—ay, think of these, and so remembering how many poor devils are living in a state of utter respectability, you will glory the more in your own delightful escape.

But with all its charms, a mud floor (like a mercenary match) does certainly promote early rising. Long before daybreak we were up and had breakfasted; afterwards there was nearly a whole tedious hour to endure whilst the horses were laden by torchlight; but this had an end, and then our day's journey began. Cloaked, and sombre, at first we made our sullen way through the darkness with scarcely one barter of words; but soon the genial morn burst down from heaven, and stirred the blood so gladly through our veins that the very Suridgees, with all their troubles, could now look up for an instant, and almost seem to believe in the temporary goodness of God.

The actual movement from one place to another, in Europeanized countries, is a process so temporary—it occupies, I mean, so small a proportion of the traveller's entire time—that his mind remains unsettled so long as the wheels are going. He may be

alive enough to external objects of interest, and to the crowding ideas which are often invited by the excitement of a changing scene, but he is still conscious of being in a provisional state, and his mind is for ever recurring to the expected end of his journey; his ordinary ways of thought have been interrupted, and before any new mental habits can be formed he is quietly fixed in his hotel. It will be otherwise with you when you journey in the East. Day after day, perhaps week after week, and month after month, your foot is in the stirrup. To taste the cold breath of the earliest morn, and to lead, or follow, your bright cavalcade till sunset through forests and mountain passes, through valleys and desolate plains, all this becomes your *MODE OF LIFE*, and you ride, eat, drink, and curse the mosquitoes as systematically as your friends in England eat, drink, and sleep. If you are wise, you will not look upon the long period of time thus occupied in actual movement as the mere gulf dividing you from the end of your journey, but rather as one of those rare and plastic seasons of your life from which, perhaps, in after times, you may love to date the moulding of your character—that is, your very identity. Once feel this, and you will soon grow happy and contented in your saddle home. As for me and my comrade, however, in this part of our journey we often forgot Stamboul, forgot all the Ottoman Empire, and only remembered old times. We went back, loitering on the banks of the Thames—not grim old Thames of “after life,” that washes the Parliament houses and drowns despairing girls, but Thames the “old Eton fellow,” that wrestled

with us in our boyhood till he taught us to be stronger than he. We bullied Keate, and scoffed at Larrey Miller and Okes; we rode along loudly laughing, and talked to the grave Servian forest as though it were the "Brocas clump."

Our pace was commonly very slow, for the baggage-horses served us for a drag, and kept us to a rate of little more than five miles in the hour; but now and then, and chiefly at night, a spirit of movement would suddenly animate the whole party: the baggage-horses would be teased into a gallop, and when once this was done, there would be such a banging of portmanteaus, and such convulsions of carpet-bags upon their panting sides, and the Suridgces would follow them up with such a hurricane of blows, and screams, and curses, that stopping or relaxing was scarcely possible; then the rest of us would put our horses into a gallop, and so, all shouting cheerily, would hunt and drive the sumpter beasts, like a flock of goats, up hill and down dale, right on to the end of their journey.

The distances between our relays of horses varied greatly; some were not more than fifteen or twenty miles, but twice, I think, we performed a whole day's journey of more than sixty miles with the same beasts.

When at last we came out from the forest our road lay through scenes like those of an English park. The green sward, unfenced, and left to the free pasture of cattle, was dotted with groups of stately trees, and here and there darkened over with larger masses of wood that seemed gathered together for bounding the domain, and shutting out some "infernal" fellow-

creature in the shape of a newly-made squire; in one or two spots the hanging corpses look down upon a lawn below with such sheltering mien <sup>appearance</sup> that seeing the like in England, you would have been tempted almost to ask the name of the spendthrift or the madman who had dared to pull down "the old hall."

There are few countries less infested by "lions" than the provinces on this part of your route; you are not called upon to "drop a tear" over the tomb of "the once brilliant" anybody, or to pay your "tribute of respect" to anything dead or alive. There are no Servian or Bulgarian litterateurs with whom it would be positively disgraceful not to form an acquaintance; you have no staring, no praising to get through: the only public building of any interest that lies on the road is of modern date, but is said to be a good specimen of Oriental architecture; it is of a pyramidical shape, and is made up of thirty thousand skulls contributed by the rebellious Servians in the early part (I believe) of this century. I am not at all sure of my date, but I fancy it was in the year 1806 that the first skull was laid. I am ashamed to say that in the darkness of the early morning we unknowingly went by the neighbourhood of this triumph of art, and so basely got off from admiring "the simple grandeur of the architect's conception," and "the exquisite beauty of the fretwork."

There being no "lions," we ought at least to have met with a few perils, but the only robbers we saw anything of had been long since dead and gone; the poor fellows had been impaled upon high poles, and so propped up by the transverse spokes beneath them

that their skeletons, clothed with some white, wax-like remains of flesh, still sat up lolling in the sunshine, and listlessly stared without eyes.

One day it seemed to me that our path was a little more rugged than usual, and I found that I was deserving for myself the title of Sabalkansky, or "Transcender of the Balcan." The truth is that as a military barrier the Balcan is a fabulous mountain; such seems to be the view of Major Keppell, who looked on it towards the East with the eye of a soldier; and certainly in the Sophia pass there is no narrow defile, and no ascent sufficiently difficult to stop, or delay for a long time, a train of siege artillery.

Before we reached Adrianople, Methley had been seized with we knew not what ailment, and when we had taken up our quarters in the city he was cast to the very earth by sickness. Adrianople enjoyed an English consul, and I felt sure that, in Eastern phrase, his house would cease to be his house, and would become the house of my sick comrade. I should have judged rightly under ordinary circumstances, but the levelling plague was abroad, and the dread of it had dominion over the consular mind. So now (whether dying or not, one could hardly tell), upon a quilt stretched out along the floor, there lay the best hope of an ancient line, without the material aids to comfort of even the humblest sort, and, sad to say, without the consolation of a friend, or even a comrade, worth having. I have a notion that tenderness and pity are affections occasioned in some measure by living within doors; certainly, at the time I speak of, the open-air life which I had been leading, or the wayfaring hard-

ships of the journey, had so strangely blunted me that I felt intolerant of illness, and looked down upon my companion as if the poor fellow in falling ill had betrayed a want of spirit. I entertained, too, a most absurd idea—an idea that his illness was partly affected. You see that I have made a confession: this I hope—that I may hereafter look charitably upon the hard, savage acts of peasants, and the cruelties of a “brutal” soldiery. God knows that I strived to melt myself into common charity, and to put on a gentleness which I could not feel; but this attempt did not cheat the keenness of the sufferer: he could not have felt the less deserted because that I was with him.

We called to aid a solemn Armenian (I think he was), half soothsayer, half hakim, or doctor, who, all the while counting his beads, fixed his eyes steadily upon the patient, and then suddenly dealt him a violent blow on the chest. Methley bravely dissembled his pain, for he fancied that the blow was meant to try whether or not the plague were on him.

Here was really a sad embarrassment—no bed—nothing to offer the invalid in the shape of food, save a piece of thin, tough, flexible, drab-coloured cloth, made of flour and mill-stones in equal proportions, and called by the name of “bread”; then the patient, of course, had no “confidence in his medical man”; and, on the whole, the best chance of saving my comrade seemed to lie in taking him out of the reach of his doctor, and bearing him away to the neighbourhood of some more genial consul. But how was this to be done? Methley was much too ill to be kept in his saddle, and wheel carriages, as means of

travelling, were unknown. There is, however, such a thing as an "Araba," a vehicle drawn by oxen, in which the wives of a rich man are sometimes dragged four or five miles over the grass by way of recreation. The carriage is rudely framed, but you recognize in the simple grandeur of its design a likeness to things majestic; in short, if your carpenter's son were to make a "Lord Mayor's coach" for little Amy, he would build a carriage very much in the style of a Turkish Araba. No one had ever heard of horses being used for drawing a carriage in this part of the world, but Necessity is the mother of Innovation as well as of Invention. I was fully justified, I think, in arguing that there were numerous instances of horses being used for that purpose in our own country—that the laws of nature are uniform in their operation over all the world (except Ireland)—that that which was true in Piccadilly must be true in Adrianople—that the matter could not fairly be treated as an ecclesiastical question, for that the circumstance of Methley's going on to Stamboul in an Araba drawn by horses, when calmly and dispassionately considered, would appear to be perfectly consistent with the maintenance of the Mohammedan religion, as by law established. Thus poor, dear, patient Reason would have fought her slow battle against Asiatic prejudice, and I am convinced that she would have established the possibility (and perhaps even the propriety) of harnessing horses in a hundred and fifty years; but in the meantime Mysseri, well seconded by our Tatar, contrived to bring the controversy to a premature end by having the horses put to.

It was a sore thing for me to see my poor comrade brought to this, for young though he was, he was a veteran in travel. When scarcely yet of age, he had invaded India from the frontiers of Russia, and that so swiftly that, measuring by the time of his flight, the broad dominions of the King of Kings were shrivelled up to a dukedom; and now, poor fellow, he was to be poked into an Araba, like a Georgian girl! He suffered greatly, for there were no springs for the carriage and no road for the wheels, and so the concern jolted on over the open country with such twists, and jerks, and jumps as might almost dislocate the supple tongue of Satan.

All day the patient kept himself shut up within the lattice-work of the Araba, and I could hardly know how he was faring until the end of the day's journey, when I found that he was not worse, and was buoyed up with the hope of some day reaching Constantinople. *studying*

I was always conning over my maps, and fancied that I knew pretty well my line; but after Adrianople I had made more southing than I knew for, and it was with unbelieving wonder and delight that I came suddenly upon the shore of the sea: a little while, and its gentle billows were flowing beneath the hoofs of my beast. But the hearing of the ripple was not enough communion, and the seeing of the blue Propontis was not to know and possess it: I must needs plunge into its depth, and quench my longing love in the palpable waves; and so when old Moostapha (defender against demons) looked round for his charge, he saw, with horror and dismay, that he for whose life



his own life stood pledged was possessed of some devil who had driven him down into the sea—that the rider and the steed had vanished from earth, and that out among the waves was the gasping crest of a post-horse and the ghostly head of the Englishman moving upon the face of the waters.

We started very early indeed on the last day of our journey, and from the moment of being off until we gained the shelter of the imperial walls we were struggling face to face with an icy storm that swept right down from the steppes of Tartary, keen, fierce, and steady as a northern conqueror. Methley's servant, who was the greatest sufferer, kept his saddle until we reached Stamboul, but was then found to be quite benumbed in limbs, and his brain was so much affected that when he was lifted from his horse he fell away in a state of unconsciousness, the first stage of a dangerous fever.

Our Tatar, worn down by care and toil, and carrying seven heavens full of water in his manifold jackets and shawls, was a mere weak and vapid dilution of the sleek Moostapha who scarce more than one fortnight before came out like a bridegroom from his chamber to take the command of our party.

Mysseri seemed somewhat over-wearied, but he had lost none of his strangely quiet energy; he wore a grave look, however, for he now had learnt that the plague was prevailing at Constantinople, and he was fearing that our two sick men, and the miserable looks of our whole party, might make us unwelcome at Pera.

We crossed the Golden Horn in a caïque. As soon

as we had landed some woe-begone-looking fellows were got together and laden with our baggage. Then on we went, dripping and sloshing, and looking very like men that had been turned back by the Royal Humane Society for being incurably drowned. Supporting our sick, we climbed up shelving steps, and threaded many windings, and at last came up into the main street of Pera, humbly hoping that we might not be judged guilty of the plague, and so be cast back with horror from the doors of the shuddering Christians.

Such was the condition of the little troop which fifteen days before had filed away so gaily from the gates of Belgrade. A couple of fevers and a north-easterly storm had thoroughly spoiled our looks.

The interest of Mysseri with the house of Giuseppini was too powerful to be denied, and at once, though not without fear and trembling, we were admitted as guests.

## V. NATURE

Selborne to-day has not changed from the secluded and quiet village it must have been when Gilbert White recorded, with a kind of loving accuracy, its times and seasons, birds, beasts and flowers, and its own little geography. The beautiful and simple truth of his work—as natural and spontaneous as Pepys's *Diary*, with silent inarticulate Nature instead of men and women—is symbolised in the lowly headstone in the churchyard, that has no inscription but the two letters "G. W." His book, actually a series of letters and a journal having the one theme of the natural beauty of Selborne and its neighbourhood, is still unique in our literature. It is the classic drama of sun and shower, wind and rain, storm and lightning, drought and frost, set on a tiny stage. There is little conscious art in it at all; the very absence of it makes the book greater. Other naturalists have followed White, notably two that are much nearer our own time—Richard Jefferies and W. H. Hudson. Their books are full of intimate and loving description of the countryside, particularly of Southern England. But there is something of the conscious art about them, a gentle arrogance of scientific thought, a style that even Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has been tempted to parody! They have lost the "naturalness" of the Selborne parson who had a marvellous eye for all kinds of wonders as he went about from parishioner to parishioner. Their works creak a little in their effort to make them literature.

With White's *Selborne* we must place another great book which shares with it little besides the perfect simplicity of genius. That is Isaac Walton's *Compleat Angler*, a classic of the rivers and ponds, limiting itself to a particular sport of the countryman. It has a gusto somewhat removed from the quiet of Selborne, a Bunyan-like sturdiness of description, and a downright enthusiasm that appeals even to those who have

no knowledge of line and bait. Yet it breathes the very spirit of a tranquil England. Walton holds out a perpetual invitation to us all to hear his shrewd and beautiful discourses on the ways of fish, and share his delight in the meadows about him; then, when he is done, to come and let him tell us "what holy Mr Herbert says of such days and flowers as these" before he wanders with us to the river to "try to catch the other brace of trouts."

There are other books to be read, in which more definite, technical science has been lifted up into the realm of literature. Such are Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Lord Avebury's books on insects, the works of the great French naturalist, Henri Fabre, in their English translation, and Faraday's *The Chemical History of a Candle*. None of these belongs to literature as do *Selborne* and *The Compleat Angler*; but they are full of interest as a type of writing that is a little off the beaten track, and has an appeal all its own.

## ISAAC WALTON

1593-1683

### FLY-FISHING

I SHALL next give you some other directions for fly-fishing, such as are given by Mr Thomas Barker, a gentleman that hath spent much time in fishing: but I shall do it with a little variation.

First, let your rod be light, and very gentle: I take the best to be of two pieces. And let not your line exceed, especially for three or four links next to the hook, I say, not exceed three or four hairs at the most; though you may fish a little stronger above, in the upper part of your line: but if you can attain

to angle with one hair, you shall have more rises, and catch more fish. Now you must be sure not to cumber yourself with too long a line, as most do. And before you begin to angle, cast to have the wind on your back; and the sun, if it shines, to be before you; and to fish down the stream; and carry the point or top of your rod downward, by which means the shadow of yourself, and rod too, will be the least offensive to the fish; for the sight of any shade amazes the fish, and spoils your sport, of which you must take great care.

In the middle of March, till which time a man should not in honesty catch a Trout; or in April, if the weather be dark, or a little windy or cloudy; the best fishing is with the palmer-worm, of which I last spoke to you; but of these there be divers kinds, or at least of divers colours: these and the May-fly are the ground of all fly-angling: which are to be thus made:

First, you must arm your hook with the line, in the inside of it: then take your scissors, and cut so much of a brown mallard's feather as, in your own reason, will make the wings of it, you having, withal, regard to the bigness or littleness of your hook; then lay the outmost part of your feather next to your hook; then the point of your feather next the shank of your hook, and, having so done, whip it three or four times about the hook with the same silk with which your hook was armed; and having made the silk fast, take the hackle of a cock or capon's neck, or a plover's top, which is usually better: take off the one side of the feather, and then take the hackle, silk or crewel, gold or silver thread; make these fast at the bent of the

hook, that is to say, below your arming; then you must take the hackle, the silver or gold thread, and work it up to the wings, shifting or still removing your finger as you turn the silk about the hook, and still looking, at every stop or turn, that your gold or what materials soever you make your fly of, do lie right and neatly; and if you find they do so, then when you have made the head, make all fast: and then work your hackle up to the head, and make them fast: and then, with a needle, or pin, divide the wing into two; and then, with the arming silk, whip it about cross-ways betwixt the wings: and then with your thumb you must turn the point of the feather towards the bent of the hook; and then work three or four times about the shank of the hook; and then view the proportion; and if all be neat, and to your liking, fasten.

I confess, no direction can be given to make a man of a dull capacity able to make a fly well: and yet I know this, with a little practice, will help an ingenious angler in a good degree. But to see a fly made by an artist in that kind, is the best teaching to make it. And, then, an ingenious angler may walk by the river, and mark what flies fall on the water that day; and catch one of them, if he sees the Trouts leap at a fly of that kind: and then having always hooks ready-hung with him, and having a bag always with him, with bear's hair, or the hair of a brown or sad-coloured heifer, hackles of a cock or capon, several coloured silk and crewel to make the body of the fly, the feathers of a drake's head, black or brown sheep's wool, or hog's wool, or hair, thread

of gold, and of silver; silk of several colours, especially sad-coloured, to make the fly's head: and there be also other coloured feathers, both of little birds and of speckled fowl: I say, having those with him in a bag, and trying to make a fly, though he miss at first, yet shall he at last hit it better, even to such a perfection as none can well teach him. And if he hit to make his fly right, and have the luck to hit, also, where there is store of Trouts, a dark day, and a right wind, he will catch such store of them, as will encourage him to grow more and more in love with the art of fly making.

VENATOR. But, my loving master, if any wind will not serve, then I wish I were in Lapland, to buy a good wind of one of the honest witches, that sell so many winds there, and so cheap.

PISCATOR. Marry, scholar, but I would not be there, nor indeed from under this tree; for look how it begins to rain, and by the clouds, if I mistake not, we shall presently have a smoking shower, and therefore sit close; this sycamore-tree will shelter us: and I will tell you, as they shall come into my mind, more observations of fly-fishing for a Trout.

But first for the wind: you are to take notice that of the winds the south wind is said to be best. One observes, that

when the wind is south,  
It blows your bait into a fish's mouth.

Next to that, the west wind is believed to be the best: and having told you that the east wind is the worst, I need not tell you which wind is the best in

the third degree: and yet, as Solomon observes, that "he that considers the wind shall never sow"; so he that busies his head too much about them, if the weather be not made extreme cold by an east wind, shall be a little superstitious: for as it is observed by some, that "there is no good horse of a bad colour"; so I have observed, that if it be a cloudy day, and not extreme cold, let the wind sit in what corner it will and do its worst, I heed it not. And yet take this for a rule, that I would willingly fish, standing on the lee-shore: and you are to take notice, that the fish lies or swims nearer the bottom, and in deeper water, in winter than in summer; and also nearer the bottom in any cold day, and then gets nearest the lee-side of the water.

But I promised to tell you more of the Fly-fishing for a Trout; which I may have time enough to do, for you see it rains May butter. First for a May-fly: you may make his body with greenish-coloured crewel, or willowish colour; darkening it in most places with waxed silk; or ribbed with black hair; or, some of them, ribbed with silver thread; and such wings, for the colour, as you see the fly to have at that season, nay, at that very day on the water. Or you may make the Oak-fly: with an orange, tawny, and black ground; and the brown of a mallard's feather for the wings. And you are to know, that these two are most excellent flies, that is, the May-fly and the Oak-fly.

And let me again tell you, that you keep as far from the water as you can possibly, whether you fish with a fly or worm; and fish down the stream. And when you fish with a fly, if it be possible, let no part



of your line touch the water, but your fly only; and be still moving your fly upon the water, or casting it into the water, you yourself being also always moving down the stream.

Mr Barker commends several sorts of the palmer-flies; not only those ribbed with silver and gold, but others that have their bodies all made of black; or some with red, and a red hackle. You may also make the Hawthorn-fly: which is all black, and not big, but very small, the smaller the better. Or the Oak-fly, the body of which is orange colour and black crewel, with a brown wing. Or a fly made with a peacock's feather is excellent in a bright day: you must be sure you want not in your magazine-bag the peacock's feather; and grounds of such wool and crewel as will make the grass-hopper. And note, that usually the smallest flies are the best; and note also, that the light fly does usually make most sport in a dark day, and the darkest and least fly in a bright or clear day: and lastly note, that you are to repair upon any occasion to your magazine-bag: and upon any occasion, vary and make them lighter or sadder, according to your fancy, or the day.

And now I shall tell you, that the fishing with a natural-fly is excellent, and affords much pleasure. They may be found thus: the May-fly, usually in and about that month, near to the river-side, especially against rain: the Oak-fly, on the butt or body of an oak or ash, from the beginning of May to the end of August; it is a brownish fly and easy to be so found, and stands usually with his head downward, that is to say, towards the root of the tree: the small black-fly,

or Hawthorn-fly, is to be had on any hawthorn bush after the leaves be come forth. With these and a short line, as I shewed to angle for a Chub, you may dape or dop, and also with a grasshopper, behind a tree, or in any deep hole; still making it to move on the top of the water as if it were alive, and still keeping yourself out of sight, you shall certainly have sport if there be Trouts; yea, in a hot day, but especially in the evening of a hot day, you will have sport.

And now, scholar, my direction for fly-fishing is ended with this shower, for it has done raining. And now look about you, and see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay, and the earth smells so sweetly too.

## GILBERT WHITE

1720-1793

### A REMARKABLE FROST

There were some circumstances attending the remarkable frost of January 1776 so singular and striking that a short detail of them may not be unacceptable.

The most certain way to be exact will be to copy the passages from my journal, which were taken from time to time as things occurred. But it may be proper previously to remark that the first week in January was uncommonly wet, and drowned with vast rains from every quarter; from whence may be inferred, as there is great reason to believe is the case, that intense frosts seldom take place till the earth is completely

glutted and chilled with water,<sup>1</sup> and hence dry autumns are seldom followed by rigorous winters.

January 7th.—Snow driving all the day, which was followed by frost, sleet, and some snow, till the twelfth, when a prodigious mass overwhelmed all the works of men, drifting over the tops of the gates and filling the hollow lanes.

On the fourteenth the writer was obliged to be much abroad, and thinks he never before or since has encountered such rugged, Siberian weather. Many of the narrow roads are now filled above the tops of the hedges, through which the snow was driven in most romantic and grotesque shapes, so striking to the imagination as not to be seen without wonder and pleasure. The poultry dared not to stir out of their roosting-places, for cocks and hens are so dazzled and confounded by the glare of the snow that they would soon perish without assistance. The hares also lay sullenly in their seats, and would not move till compelled by hunger, being conscious, poor animals, that the drifts and heaps treacherously betray their footsteps, and prove fatal to numbers of them.

From the fourteenth the snow continued to increase, and began to stop the road-waggons and coaches, which could no longer keep on their regular stages; and especially on the western roads, where the fall appears to have been greater than in the south.

<sup>1</sup> The autumn preceding January 1768 was very wet, and particularly the month of September, during which there fell at Lyndon, in the county of Rutland, six inches and a half of rain. And the terrible long frost in 1739-40 set in after a rainy season and when the springs were very high.

The company at Bath that wanted to attend the Queen's birthday were strangely incommoded; many carriages of persons who got, in their way to town from Bath, as far as Marlborough, after strange embarrassments, here met with a *ne plus ultra*. The ladies fretted, and offered large rewards to labourers if they would shovel them a track to London; but the relentless heaps of snow were too bulky to be removed; and so the eighteenth passed over, leaving the company in very uncomfortable circumstances at the Castle and other inns.

On the twentieth the sun shone out for the first time since the frost began, a circumstance, that has been remarked before, much in favour of vegetation. All this time the cold was not very intense, for the thermometer stood at 29, 28, 25, and thereabout; but on the twenty-first it descended to 20. The birds now began to be in a very pitiable and starving condition. Tamed by the season, skylarks settled in the streets of towns, because they saw the ground was bare; rooks frequented dunghills close to houses; and crows watched horses as they passed, and greedily devoured what dropped from them; hares now came into men's gardens, and scraping away the snow, devoured such plants as they could find.

On the twenty-second the author had occasion to go to London, through a sort of Laplandian scene very wild and grotesque indeed. But the metropolis itself exhibited a still more singular appearance than the country; for, being bedded deep in snow, the pavement could not be touched by the wheels or the horses' feet, so that the carriages ran about without

the least noise. Such an exemption from din and clatter was strange, but not pleasant; it seemed to convey an uncomfortable idea of desolation:

... *Ipsa silentia terrent.*

On the twenty-seventh much snow fell all day, and in the evening the frost became very intense. At South Lambeth, for the four following nights, the thermometer fell to 11, 7, 6, 6; and at Selborne to 7, 6, 10; and on the 31st of January, just before sunrise, with rime on the trees and on the tube of the glass, the quicksilver sunk exactly to zero, being 32 degrees below the freezing-point; but by eleven in the morning, though in the shade, it sprung up to  $16\frac{1}{2}$ —a most unusual degree of cold this for the south of England! During these four nights the cold was so penetrating that it occasioned ice in warm chambers and under beds; and in the day the wind was so keen that persons of robust constitutions could scarcely endure to face it. The Thames was at once so frozen over, both above and below the bridge, that crowds ran about on the ice. The streets were now strangely encumbered with snow, which crumbled and trod dusty, and, turning grey, resembled bay-salt; what had fallen on the roofs was so perfectly dry that from first to last it lay twenty-six days on the houses in the city, a longer time than had been remembered by

\* At Selborne the cold was greater than at any other place that the author could hear of with certainty, though some reports at the time that at a village in Kent the thermometer fell two degrees below zero, viz. thirty-four degrees below the freezing-point.

The thermometer used at Selborne was graduated by Benjamin Martin.

the oldest housekeepers living. According to all appearances we might now have expected the continuance of this rigorous weather for weeks to come, since every night increased in severity; but behold, without any apparent cause, on the first of February a thaw took place, and some rain followed before night, making good the observation above, that frosts often go off, as it were, at once, without any gradual declension of cold. On the second of February the thaw persisted, and on the third swarms of little insects were frisking and sporting in a court-yard at South Lambeth as if they had felt no frost. Why the juices in the small bodies and smaller limbs of such minute beings are not frozen is a matter of curious inquiry.

Severe frosts seem to be partial, or to run in currents; for at the same juncture, as the author was informed by accurate correspondents at Lyndon, in the county of Rutland, the thermometer stood at 19; at Blackburn, in Lancashire, at 19; and at Manchester at 21, 20, and 18. Thus does some unknown circumstance strangely overbalance latitude, and render the cold sometimes much greater in the southern than the northern parts of this kingdom.

#### AN AMAZING SUMMER

The summer of the year 1783 was an amazing and portentous one, and full of horrible phenomena; for, besides the alarming meteors and tremendous thunderstorms that affrighted and distressed the different counties of this kingdom, the peculiar haze, or smoky fog, that prevailed for many weeks in this island, and in every part of Europe, and even beyond its limits,

was a most extraordinary appearance, unlike anything known within the memory of man. By my journal I find that I had noticed this strange occurrence from June 23 to July 20 inclusive, during which period the wind varied to every quarter without making any alteration in the air. The sun at noon looked as black as a clouded moon, and shed a rust-coloured, ferruginous light on the ground and floors of rooms, but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting. All the time, the heat was so intense that butchers' meat could hardly be eaten the day after it was killed; and the flies swarmed so in the lanes and hedges, that they rendered the horses half frantic, and riding irksome. The country people began to look with a superstitious awe at the red, lowering aspect of the sun; and indeed there was reason for the most enlightened person to be apprehensive, for all the while Calabria and part of the isle of Sicily were torn and convulsed with earthquakes, and about that juncture a volcano sprang out of the sea on the coast of Norway. On this occasion Milton's noble simile of the sun, in his first book of *Paradise Lost*, frequently occurred to my mind; and it is indeed particularly applicable, because towards the end it alludes to a superstitious kind of dread with which the minds of men are always impressed by such strange and unusual phenomena:

... As when the sun, new risen,  
Looks through the horizontal, misty air,  
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs...

W. H. HUDSON

1841-1917

## WHITESHEET HILL

On Easter Saturday the roadsides and copses by the little river Nadder were full of children gathering primroses; they might have filled a thousand baskets without the flowers being missed, so abundant were they in that place. Cold though it was the whole air was laden with the delicious fragrance. It was pleasant to see and talk with the little people occupied with the task they loved so well, and I made up my mind to see the result of all this flower-gathering next day in some of the village churches in the neighbourhood—Fovant, Teffont Evias, Chilmark, Swallowcliffe, Tisbury, and Fonthill Bishop. I had counted on some improvement in the weather—some bright sunshine to light up the flower-decorated interiors; but Easter Sunday proved colder than ever, with the bitter north-east still blowing, the grey travelling cloud still covering the sky; and so to get the full benefit of the bitterness I went instead to spend my day on the top of the biggest down above the valley. That was Whitesheet Hill, and forms the highest part of the long ridge dividing the valleys of the Ebbles and Nadder.

It was roughest and coldest up there, and suited my temper best, for when the weather seems spiteful one finds a grim sort of satisfaction in defying it. On a genial day it would have been very pleasant on that



lofty plain, for the flat top of the vast down is like a plain in appearance, and the earthworks on it show that it was once a populous habitation of man. Now because of the wind and cloud its aspect was bare and bleak and desolate, and after roaming about for an hour, exploring the thickest furze patches, I began to think that my day would have to be spent in solitude, without a living creature to keep me company. The birds had apparently all been blown away and the rabbits were staying at home in their burrows. Not even an insect could I see, although the furze was in full blossom; the honey-suckers were out of sight and torpid, and the bloom itself could no longer look "unprofitably gay," as the poet says it does. "Not even a wheatear!" I said, for I had counted on that bird in the intervals between the storms, although I knew I should not hear his wild delightful warble in such weather.

Then, all at once, I beheld that very bird, a solitary female, flitting on over the flat ground before me, perching on the little green ant-mounds and flirting its tail and bobbing as if greatly excited at my presence in that lonely place. I wondered where its mate was, following it from place to place as it flew, determined now I had found a bird to keep it in sight. Presently a great blackness appeared low down in the cloudy sky, and rose and spread, travelling fast towards me, and the little wheatear fled in fear from it and vanished from sight over the rim of the down. But I was there to defy the weather, and so instead of following the bird in search of shelter I sat down among some low furze bushes and waited and watched. By-and-by

I caught sight of three magpies, rising one by one at long intervals from the furze and flying laboriously towards a distant hill-top grove of pines. Then I heard the wailing cry of a pewit, and caught sight of the bird at a distance, and soon afterwards a sound of another character—the harsh angry cry of a carrion crow, almost as deep as the raven's angry voice. Before long I discovered the bird at a great height coming towards me in hot pursuit of a kestrel. They passed directly over me so that I had them a long time in sight, the kestrel travelling quietly on in the face of the wind, the crow toiling after, and at intervals spurting till he got near enough to hurl himself at his enemy, emitting his croaks of rage. For invariably the kestrel with one of his sudden swallow-like turns avoided the blow and went on as before. I watched them until they were lost to sight in the coming blackness and wondered that so intelligent a creature as a crow should waste his energies in that vain chase. Still one could understand it and even sympathise with him. For the kestrel is a most insulting creature towards the bigger birds. He knows that they are incapable of paying him out, and when he finds them off their guard he will drop down and inflict a blow just for the fun of the thing. This outraged crow appeared determined to have his revenge.

Then the storm broke on me, and so fiercely did the rain and sleet thrash me that, fearing a cold soaking, I fled before it to the rim of the plain, where the wheatear had vanished, and saw, a couple of hundred yards down on the smooth steep slope, a thicket of dwarf trees. It was the only shelter in sight,

and to it I went, to discover, much to my disgust, that the trees were nothing but elders. For there is no tree that affords so poor a shelter, especially on the high open downs, where the foliage is scantier than in other situations and lets in the wind and rain in full force upon you.

But the elder affects me in two ways. I like it on account of early associations, and because the birds delight in its fruit, though they wisely refuse to build in its branches; and I dislike it because its smell is offensive to me and its berries the least pleasant of all wild fruits to my taste. I can eat ivy-berries in March, and yew in its season, poison or not; and hips and haws and holly-berries and harsh acorn, and the rowan, which some think acrid; but the elderberry I can't stomach.

How comes it, I have asked more than once, that this poor tree is so often seen on the downs where it is so badly fitted to be and makes so sorry an appearance with its weak branches broken and its soft leaves torn by the winds? How badly it contrasts with the other trees and bushes that flourish on the downs—furze, juniper, holly, blackthorn, and hawthorn!

Two years ago, one day in the early spring, I was walking on an extensive down in another part of Wiltshire with the tenant of the land, who began there as a large sheep-farmer, but eventually finding that he could make more with rabbits than with sheep turned most of his land into a warren. The higher part of this down was overgrown with furze, mixed with holly and other bushes, but the slopes were mostly very bare. At one spot on a wide bare slope

where the rabbits had formed a big group of burrows there was a close little thicket of young elder trees, looking exceedingly conspicuous in the bright green of early April. Calling my companion's attention to this little thicket I said something about the elder growing on the open downs where it always appeared to be out of harmony with its surroundings. "I don't suppose you planted elders here," I said.

"No, but I know who did," he returned, and he then gave me this curious history of the trees. Five years before, the rabbits, finding it a suitable spot to dig in, probably because of a softer chalk there, made a number of deep burrows at that spot. When the wheatears, or "horse-maggers" as he called them, returned in spring two or three pairs attached themselves to this group of burrows and bred in them. There was that season a solitary elder-bush higher up on the down among the furze which bore a heavy crop of berries; and when the fruit was ripe he watched the birds feeding on it, the wheatears among them. The following spring seedlings came up out of the loose earth heaped about the rabbit burrows, and as they were not cut down by the rabbits, for they dislike the elder, they grew up, and now formed a clump of fifty or sixty little trees of six feet to eight feet in height.

Who would have thought to find a tree-planter in the wheatear, the bird of the stony waste and open naked down, who does not even ask for a bush to perch on?

It then occurred to me that in every case where I had observed a clump of elder bushes on the bare

downside, it grew upon a village or collection of rabbit burrows, and it is probable that in every case the clump owed its existence to the wheatears who had dropped the seed about their nesting-place.

The clump where I had sought a shelter from the storm was composed of large old dilapidated-looking half-dead elders; perhaps their age was not above thirty or forty years, but they looked older than hawthorns of one or two centuries; and under them the rabbits had their diggings—huge old mounds and burrows that looked like a badger's earth. Here, too, the burrows had probably existed first and had attracted the wheatears, and the birds had brought the seed from some distant bush.

Crouching down in one of the big burrows at the roots of an old elder I remained for half an hour, listening to the thump-thump of the alarmed rabbits about me, and the accompanying hiss and swish of the wind and sleet and rain in the ragged branches.

The storm over I continued my rambles on White-sheet Hill, and coming back an hour or two later to the very spot where I had seen and followed the wheatear, I all at once caught sight of a second bird, lying dead on the turf close to my feet! The sudden sight gave me a shock of astonishment, mingled with admiration and grief. For how pretty it looked, though dead, lying on its back, the little black legs stuck stiffly up, the long wings pressed against the sides, their black tips touching together like the clasped hands of a corpse; and the fan-like black and white tail, half open as in life, moved perpetually up and down by the wind, as if that tail-flirting action

of the bird had continued after death. It was very beautiful in its delicate shape and pale harmonious colouring, resting on the golden-green mossy turf. And it was a male, undoubtedly the mate of the wheat-ear I had seen at the spot, and its little mate, not knowing what death is, had probably been keeping watch near it, wondering at its strange stillness and greatly fearing for its safety when I came that way, and passed by without seeing it.

Poor little migrant, did you come back across half the world for this—back to your home on Whitesheet Hill to grow cold and fail in the cold April wind, and finally to look very pretty, lying stiff and cold, to the one pair of human eyes that were destined to see you! The little birds that come and go and return to us over such vast distances, they perish like this in myriads annually; flying to and from us they are blown away by death like sere autumn leaves, “the pestilence-stricken multitudes” whirled away by the wind! They die in myriads: that is not strange; the strange, the astonishing thing is the fact of death; what can they tell us of it—the wise men who live or have ever lived on the earth—what can they say now of the bright intelligent spirit, the dear little emotional soul, that had so fit a tenement and so fitly expressed itself in motions of such exquisite grace, in melody so sweet! Did it go out like the glow-worm’s lamp, the life and sweetness of the flower? Was its destiny not like that of the soul, specialised in a different direction, of the saint or poet or philosopher! Alas, they can tell us nothing!

I could not go away leaving it in that exposed

place on the turf, to be found a little later by a magpie or carrion crow or fox, and devoured. Close by there was a small round hillock, an old forsaken nest of the little brown ants, green and soft with moss and small creeping herbs—a suitable grave for a wheatear. Cutting out a round piece of turf from the side, I made a hole with my stick and put the dead bird in and replacing the turf left it neatly buried.

It was not that I had or have any quarrel with the creatures I have named, or would have them other than they are—carrion-eaters and scavengers, Nature's balance-keepers and purifiers. The only creatures on earth I loathe and hate are the gourmets, the carrion-crows and foxes of the human kind who devour wheatears and skylarks at their tables.

## VI. HISTORY

The broadcasting of literature consequent on the advance in printing and the researches and conclusions of many great minds all resulted in a widespread interest in the principles of historical writing, as apart from the facts of history themselves. Boswell's minute record of Johnson's life and surroundings, Macaulay's brilliant sweep of vast fields, Carlyle's sneers—all these are indications of the new interest. In this section are represented three of the great men who contributed to historical literature—Gibbon, Macaulay and Froude.

Gibbon's most famous work was *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In that history he displayed much of the comprehensive mind needed by the modern historian. Yet his knowledge of the detail of Rome's story was encyclopaedic. His account of the fall of the Eternal City before Attila's encroaching barbarians and the subsequent death of their redoubtable leader is a typical example of his vivid narrative style. Gibbon refused to subscribe to the idea that Attila died at the hands of his bride. It is precisely because he was not led away by romantic incidents that *The Decline and Fall* has retained its position near the head of the literature dealing with Rome.

Lord Macaulay stands out as one of the greatest historical writers of all time. Although fiercely criticised when living and despite obvious defects in his information and partiality, he has survived the test of time. Doubtless this is due as much to his style as to his knowledge. His essays are reminiscent of portraits as painted by the Old Masters. Against a background of intricate yet relevant detail he sets a human figure with its heroisms and its villainies, its foibles and its fads, its victories and its defeats. In the face are cunningly depicted the secret thoughts and the outward shams—each ruthlessly revealed. For, as Macaulay himself says, "It is good to be often reminded



of the inconsistency of human nature, and to learn to look without wonder or disgust on the weaknesses which are found in the strongest minds." The essay on Warren Hastings is the natural partner of that on Clive. Both show a wide and deep knowledge of Indian affairs. In each the scene changes from the brilliant East to the dull interior of the House of Commons, and again to the fresh meadows of the English country-side. In each the principal character was a great man who was yet as weak as a child.

There is something of Macaulay and of Gibbon in James Anthony Froude who did so much to create interest in the Age of Elizabeth—one of the richest and most absorbing periods in the history of England. He had Gibbon's mastery of detail and of relevant fact; but he had also Macaulay's gift of choosing the right characteristic or of stressing the right incident to make his characters stand out against their background. *England's Forgotten Worthies* consists of a number of short sketches of men who, although famous enough to-day, were little known at the time Froude wrote. His sketch of Sir Humfrey Gilbert is a brilliant piece of characterisation. The youth spent in Devon, the sea-faring companions, the early interest in geographical problems and the ruinous voyages culminating in his death on the *Squirrel*—these are drawn with a master hand. We can well say with Gilbert, not only of adventure but of History itself: "He is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal."

EDWARD GIBBON

1737-1794

ATTILA'S INVASION OF ITALY AND DEATH

NEITHER the spirit nor the forces nor the reputation of Attila were impaired by the failure of the Gallic expedition. In the ensuing spring, he repeated his demand of the princess Honoria and her patrimonial treasures. The demand was again rejected, or eluded; and the indignant lover immediately took the field, passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and besieged Aquileia with an innumerable host of Barbarians. Those Barbarians were unskilled in the methods of conducting a regular siege, which, even among the ancients, required some knowledge, or at least some practice, of the mechanic arts. But the labour of many thousand provincials and captives, whose lives were sacrificed without pity, might execute the most painful and dangerous work. The skill of the Roman artists might be corrupted to the destruction of their country. The walls of Aquileia were assaulted by a formidable train of battering rams, moveable turrets, and engines, that threw stones, darts, and fire; and the monarch of the Huns employed the forcible impulse of hope, fear, emulation, and interest, to subvert the only barrier which delayed the conquest of Italy. Aquileia was at that period one of the richest, the most populous, and the strongest of the maritime cities of the Hadriatic coast. The Gothic auxiliaries, who appear to have

served under their native princes Alaric and Antala, communicated their intrepid spirit; and the citizens still remembered the glorious and successful resistance, which their ancestors had opposed to a fierce, inexorable Barbarian, who disgraced the majesty of the Roman purple. Three months were consumed without effect in the siege of Aquileia; till the want of provisions, and the clamours of his army, compelled Attila to relinquish the enterprise, and reluctantly to issue his orders that the troops should strike their tents the next morning and begin their retreat. But, as he rode round the walls, pensive, angry, and disappointed, he observed a stork preparing to leave her nest, in one of the towers, and to fly with her infant family towards the country. He seized, with the ready penetration of a statesman, this trifling incident, which chance had offered to superstition; and exclaimed, in a loud and cheerful tone, that such a domestic bird, so constantly attached to human society, would never have abandoned her ancient seats, unless those towers had been devoted to impending ruin and solitude. The favourable omen inspired an assurance of victory; the siege was renewed, and prosecuted with fresh vigour; a large breach was made in the part of the wall from whence the stork had taken her flight; the Huns mounted to the assault with irresistible fury; and the succeeding generation could scarcely discover the ruins of Aquileia. After this dreadful chastisement, Attila pursued his march; and, as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, were exposed

to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth; and applauded the unusual clemency, which preserved from the flames the public, as well as private, buildings; and spared the lives of the captive multitude. The popular traditions of Comum, Turin, or Modena, may justly be suspected; yet they concur with more authentic evidence to prove that Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy: which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and Apennine. When he took possession of the royal palace of Milan, he was surprised, and offended, at the sight of a picture, which represented the Cæsars seated on their throne and the princes of Scythia prostrate at their feet. The revenge which Attila inflicted on this monument of Roman vanity was harmless and ingenious. He commanded a painter to reverse the figures and the attitudes; and the emperors were delineated on the same canvas, approaching in a suppliant posture to empty their bags of tributary gold before the throne of the Scythian monarch. The spectators must have confessed the truth and propriety of the alteration; and were perhaps ~~tempted~~ tempted to apply, on this singular occasion, the well-known fable of the dispute between the lion and the man.

It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod. Yet the savage destroyer undesignedly laid the foundations of a republic which revived, in the feudal state of Europe, the art and spirit of commercial industry. The celebrated name of Venice, or

Venetia, was formerly diffused over a large and fertile province of Italy, from the confines of Pannonia to the river Addua, and from the Po to the Rhætian and Julian Alps. Before the irruption of the Barbarians, fifty Venetian cities flourished in peace and prosperity; Aquileia was placed in the most conspicuous station; but the ancient dignity of Padua was supported by agriculture and manufactures, and the property of five hundred citizens, who were entitled to the equestrian rank, must have amounted, at the strictest computation, to one million seven hundred thousand pounds. Many families of Aquileia, Padua, and the adjacent towns, who fled from the sword of the Huns, found a safe, though obscure, refuge in the neighbouring island. At the extremity of the Gulf, where the Adriatic feebly imitates the tides of the ocean, near an hundred small islands are separated by shallow water from the continent, and protected from the waves by several long slips of land, which admit the entrance of vessels through some secret and narrow channels. Till the middle of the fifth century, these remote and sequestered spots remained without cultivation, with few inhabitants, and almost without a name. But the manners of the Venetian fugitives, their arts and their government, were gradually formed by their new situation; and one of the epistles of Cassiodorus, which describes their condition about seventy years afterwards, may be considered as the primitive monument of the republic. The minister of Theodoric compares them, in his quaint declamatory style, to water-fowl, who had fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves; and, though he allows that the

Venetian provinces had formerly contained many noble families, he insinuates that they were now reduced by misfortune to the same level of humble poverty. Fish was the common, and almost the universal, food of every rank; their only treasure consisted in the plenty of salt, which they extracted from the sea; and the exchange of that commodity, so essential to human life, was substituted in the neighbouring markets to the currency of gold and silver. A people, whose habitations might be doubtfully assigned to the earth or water, soon became alike familiar with the two elements; and the demands of avarice succeeded to those of necessity. The islanders, who, from Grado to Chioggia, were intimately connected with each other, penetrated into the heart of Italy by the secure, though laborious, navigation of the rivers and inland canals. Their vessels, which were continually increasing in size and number, visited all the harbours of the Gulf; and the marriage, which Venice annually celebrates with the Adriatic, was contracted in her early infancy. The epistle of Cassiodorus, the Prætorian præfect, is addressed to the maritime tribunes; and he exhorts them, in a mild tone of authority, to animate the zeal of their countrymen for the public service, which required their assistance to transport the magazines of wine and oil from the province of Istria to the royal city of Ravenna. The ambiguous office of these magistrates is explained by the tradition that, in the twelve principal islands, twelve tribunes, or judges, were created by an annual and popular election. The existence of the Venetian republic under the Gothic kingdom of Italy is at-

tested by the same authentic record, which annihilates their lofty claim of original and perpetual independence. The Italians, who had long since renounced the exercise of arms, were surprised, after forty years' peace, by the approach of a formidable Barbarian, whom they abhorred, as the enemy of their religion as well as of their republic. Amidst the general consternation, Aetius alone was incapable of fear; but it was impossible that he should achieve, alone and unassisted, any military exploits worthy of his former renown. The Barbarians who had defended Gaul refused to march to the relief of Italy; and the succours promised by the Eastern emperor were distant and doubtful. Since Aetius, at the head of his domestic troops, still maintained the field, and harassed or retarded the march of Attila, he never showed himself more truly great than at the time when his conduct was blamed by an ignorant and ungrateful people. If the mind of Valentinian had been susceptible of any generous sentiments, he would have chosen such a general for his example and his guide. But the timid grandson of Theodosius, instead of sharing the dangers, escaped from the sound, of war; and his hasty retreat from Ravenna to Rome, from an impregnable fortress to an open capital, betrayed his secret intention of abandoning Italy as soon as the danger should approach his Imperial person. This shameful abdication was suspended, however, by the spirit of doubt and delay, which commonly adheres to pusillanimous counsels, and sometimes corrects their pernicious tendency. The Western emperor, with the senate and people of Rome, embraced the more salutary resolution

of deprecating, by a solemn and suppliant embassy, the wrath of Attila. This important commission was accepted by Avienus, who, from his birth and riches, his consular dignity, the numerous train of his clients, and his personal abilities, held the first rank in the Roman senate. The specious and artful character of Avienus was admirably qualified to conduct a negotiation either of public or private interest; his colleague Trigetius had exercised the Prætorian præfecture of Italy; and Leo, bishop of Rome, consented to expose his life for the safety of his flock. The genius of Leo was exercised and displayed in the public misfortunes; and he has deserved the appellation of *Great* by the successful zeal with which he laboured to establish his opinions and his authority, under the venerable names of orthodox faith and ecclesiastical discipline. The Roman ambassadors were introduced to the tent of Attila, as he lay encamped at the place where the slow-winding *Mincius* is lost in the foaming waves of the lake *Benacus*, and trampled, with his Scythian cavalry, the farms of *Catallus* and *Virgil*. The Barbarian monarch listened with favourable, and even respectful, attention; and the deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom, or dowry, of the princess *Honorio*. The state of his army might facilitate the treaty, and hasten his retreat. Their martial spirit was relaxed by the wealth and indolence of a warm climate. The shepherds of the North, whose ordinary food consisted of milk and raw flesh, indulged themselves too freely in the use of bread, of wine, and of meat prepared and seasoned by the arts of cookery; and the progress of disease revenged in



some measure the injuries of the Italians. When Attila declared his resolution of carrying his victorious arms to the gates of Rome, he was admonished by his friends, as well as by his enemies, that Alaric had not long survived the conquest of the eternal city. His mind, superior to real danger, was assaulted by imaginary terrors; nor could he escape the influence of superstition, which had so often been subservient to his designs. The pressing eloquence of Leo, his majestic aspect and sacerdotal robes, excited the veneration of Attila for the spiritual father of the Christians. The apparition of the two apostles, St Peter and St Paul, who menaced the Barbarian with instant death, if he rejected the prayer of their successor, is one of the noblest legends of ecclesiastical tradition. The safety of Rome might deserve the interposition of celestial beings; and some indulgence is due to a fable which has been represented by the pencil of Raphael and the chisel of Algardi.

—Before the king of the Huns evacuated Italy, he threatened to return more dreadful and more implacable, if his bride, the princess Honoria, were not delivered to his ambassadors within the term stipulated by the treaty. Yet, in the meanwhile, Attila relieved his tender anxiety by adding a beautiful maid, whose name was Ildico, to the list of his innumerable wives. Their marriage was celebrated with barbaric pomp and festivity at his wooden palace beyond the Danube; and the monarch, oppressed with wine and sleep, retired, at a late hour, from the banquet to the nuptial bed. His attendants continued to respect his pleasures, or his repose, the greatest part of the ensuing day, till

the unusual silence alarmed their fears and suspicions; and, after attempting to awaken Attila by loud and repeated cries, they at length broke into the royal apartment. They found the trembling bride sitting by the bedside hiding her face, with her veil, and lamenting her own danger as well as the death of the king, who had expired during the night. An artery had suddenly burst; and, as Attila lay in a supine posture, he was suffocated by a torrent of blood, which, instead of finding a passage through the nostrils, regurgitated into the lungs and stomach. His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain, under a silken pavilion; and the chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling round in measured evolutions, chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world. According to their national custom, the Barbarians cut off a part of their hair, gashed their faces with unseemly wounds, and bewailed their valiant leader as he deserved, not with the tears of women, but with the blood of warriors. The remains of Attila were enclosed within three coffins, of gold, of silver, and of iron, and privately buried in the night: the spoils of nations were thrown into his grave; the captives who had opened the ground were inhumanly massacred; and the same Huns, who had indulged such excessive grief, feasted, with dissolute and intemperate mirth, about the recent sepulchre of their king. It was reported at Constantinople that on the fortunate night in which he expired Marcian beheld in a dream the bow of Attila broken asunder, and the

report may be allowed to prove how seldom the image of that formidable Barbarian was absent from the mind of a Roman emperor. ✓

## LORD MACAULAY

1800-1859



### THE LAST YEARS OF WARREN HASTINGS

The last twenty-four years of his life were chiefly passed at Daylesford. He amused himself with embellishing his grounds, riding fine Arab horses, fattening prize-cattle, and trying to rear Indian animals and vegetables in England. He sent for seeds of a very fine custard-apple, from the garden of what had once been his own villa, among the green hedgerows of Allipore. He tried also to naturalize in Worcestershire the delicious leeches, almost the only fruit of Bengal which deserves to be regretted even amidst the plenty of Covent Garden. The Mogul emperors, in the time of their greatness, had in vain attempted to introduce into Hindostan the goat of the table-land of Thibet; whose down supplies the looms of Cashmere with the materials of the finest shawls. Hastings tried, with no better fortune, to rear a breed at Daylesford; nor does he seem to have succeeded better with the cattle of Bootan, whose tails are in high esteem as the best fans for brushing away the mosquitoes.

Literature divided his attention with his conservatories and his menagerie. He had always loved books,

and they were now necessary to him. Though not a poet, in any high sense of the word, he wrote neat and polished lines with great facility, and was fond of exercising this talent. Indeed, if we must speak out, ~~He~~ seems to have been more of a Trissotin than was to be expected from the powers of his mind, and from the great part which he had played in life. We are assured in these Memoirs that the first thing which he did in the morning was to write a copy of verses. When the family and guests assembled, the poem made its appearance as regularly as the eggs and rolls; and Mr Gleig requires us to believe that, if from any accident Hastings came to the breakfast-table without one of his charming performances in his hand, the omission was felt by all as a grievous disappointment. Tastes differ widely. For ourselves, we must say that, however good the breakfasts at Daylesford may have been—and we are assured that the tea was of the most aromatic flavour, and that neither tongue nor venison-pasty was wanting—we should have thought the reckoning high if we had been forced to earn our repast by listening every day to a new madrigal or sonnet composed by our host. We are glad, however, that Mr Gleig has preserved this little feature of character, though we think it by no means a beauty. It is good to be often reminded of the inconsistency of human nature, and to learn to look without wonder or disgust on the weaknesses which are found in the strongest minds. Dionysius in old times, Frederic in the last century, with capacity and vigour equal to the conduct of the greatest affairs, united all the little vanities and affectations of provincial blue-stockings.

These great examples may console the admirers of Hastings for the affliction of seeing him reduced to the level of the Hayleys and Sewards.

When Hastings had passed many years in retirement, and had long outlived the common age of men, he again became for a short time an object of general attention. In 1813 the charter of the East India Company was renewed; and much discussion about Indian affairs took place in Parliament. It was determined to examine witnesses at the bar of the Commons; and Hastings was ordered to attend. He had appeared at that bar once before. It was when he read his answer to the charges which Burke had laid on the table. Since that time twenty-seven years had elapsed; public feeling had undergone a complete change; the nation had now forgotten his faults, and remembered only his services. The reappearance, too, of a man who had been among the most distinguished of a generation that had passed away, who now belonged to history, and who seemed to have risen from the dead, could not but produce a solemn and pathetic effect. The Commons received him with acclamations, ordered a chair to be set for him, and, when he retired, rose and uncovered. There were, indeed, a few who did not sympathize with the general feeling. One or two of the managers of the impeachment were present. They sate in the same seats which they had occupied when they had been thanked for the services which they had rendered in Westminster Hall: for, by the courtesy of the House, a member who has been thanked in his place is considered as having a right always to occupy that place. These gentlemen were

not disposed to admit that they had employed several of the best years of their lives in persecuting an innocent man. They accordingly kept their seats, and pulled their hats over their brows; but the exceptions only made the prevailing enthusiasm more remarkable. The Lords received the old man with similar tokens of respect. The University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws; and, in the Sheldonian Theatre, the undergraduates welcomed him with tumultuous cheering.

These marks of public esteem were soon followed by marks of royal favour. Hastings was sworn of the Privy Council, and was admitted to a long private audience of the Prince Regent, who treated him very graciously. When the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia visited England, Hastings appeared in their train both at Oxford and in the Guildhall of London, and, though surrounded by a crowd of princes and great warriors, was everywhere received with marks of respect and admiration. He was presented by the Prince Regent both to Alexander and to Frederic William; and his Royal Highness went so far as to declare in public that honours far higher than a seat in the Privy Council were due, and would soon be paid, to the man who had saved the British dominions in Asia. Hastings now confidently expected a peerage; but, from some unexplained cause, he was again disappointed.

He lived about four years longer, in the enjoyment of good spirits, of faculties not impaired to any painful or degrading extent, and of health such as is rarely enjoyed by those who attain such an age. At length,

on the twenty-second of August, 1818, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, he met death with the same tranquil and decorous fortitude which he had opposed to all the trials of his various and eventful life.

With all his faults—and they were neither few nor small—only one cemetery was worthy to contain his remains. In that temple of silence and reconciliation where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried, in the Great Abbey which has during many ages afforded a quiet resting-place to those whose minds and bodies have been shattered by the contentions of the Great Hall, the dust of the illustrious accused should have mingled with the dust of the illustrious accusers. This was not to be. Yet the place of interment was not ill chosen. Behind the chancel of the parish church of Daylesford, in earth which already held the bones of many chiefs of the house of Hastings, was laid the coffin of the greatest man who has ever borne that ancient and widely extended name. On that very spot probably, fourscore years before, the little Warren, meanly clad and scantily fed, had played with the children of ploughmen. Even then his young mind had revolved plans which might be called romantic. Yet, however romantic, it is not likely that they had been so strange as the truth. Not only had the poor orphan retrieved the fallen fortunes of his line—not only had he repurchased the old lands, and rebuilt the old dwelling—he had preserved and extended an empire. He had founded a polity. He had administered government and war with more than the capacity of Richelieu. He had patronized

learning with the judicious liberality of Cosmo. He had been attacked by the most formidable combination of enemies that ever sought the destruction of a single victim; and over that combination, after a struggle of ten years, he had triumphed. He had at length gone down to his grave in the fullness of age, in peace, after so many troubles, in honour, after so much obloquy.

Those who look on his character without favour or malevolence will pronounce that, in the two great elements of all social virtue, in respect for the rights of others, and in sympathy for the sufferings of others, he was deficient. His principles were somewhat lax. His heart was somewhat hard. But though we cannot with truth describe him either as a righteous or as a merciful ruler, we cannot regard without admiration the amplitude and fertility of his intellect, his rare talents for command, for administration, and for controversy, his dauntless courage, his honourable poverty, his fervent zeal for the interests of the State, his noble equanimity, tried by both extremes of fortune, and never disturbed by either.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

1822-1894

SIR HUMFREY GILBERT

Some two miles above the port of Dartmouth, once among the most important harbours in England, on a projecting angle of land which runs out into the



river at the head of one of its most beautiful reaches, there has stood for some centuries the Manor House of Greenaway. The water runs deep all the way to it from the sea, and the largest vessels may ride with safety within a stone's throw of the windows. In the latter half of the sixteenth century there must have met, in the hall of this mansion, a party as remarkable as could have been found anywhere in England. Humfrey and Adrian Gilbert, with their half-brother, Walter Raleigh, here, when little boys, played at sailors in the reaches of Long Stream; in the summer evenings doubtless rowing down with the tide to the port, and wondering at the quaint figure-heads and carved prows of the ships which thronged it; or climbing on board, and listening, with hearts beating, to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset. And here in later life, matured men, whose boyish dreams had become heroic action, they used again to meet in the intervals of quiet, and the rock is shown underneath the house where Raleigh smoked the first tobacco. Another remarkable man, of whom we shall presently speak more closely, could not fail to have made a fourth at these meetings. A sailor boy of Sandwich, the adjoining parish, John Davis, showed early a genius which could not have escaped the eye of such neighbours, and in the atmosphere of Greenaway he learned to be as noble as the Gilberts, and as tender and delicate as Raleigh. Of this party, for the present we confine ourselves to the host and owner, Humfrey Gilbert, knighted afterwards by Elizabeth. Led by the scenes of his childhood to the sea and to sea adventures, and afterwards, as his mind unfolded,

to study his profession scientifically, we find him as soon as he was old enough to think for himself, or make others listen to him, "amending the great errors of naval sea cards, whose common fault is to make the degree of longitude in every latitude of one common bigness"; inventing instruments for taking observations, ~~studying~~ the form of the earth, and convincing himself that there was a north-west passage, and studying the necessities of his country, and discovering the remedies for them in colonisation and extended markets for home manufactures. Gilbert, was examined before the Queen's Majesty and the Privy Council, and the record of his examination he has himself left to us in a paper which he afterwards drew up, and strange enough reading it is. The most admirable conclusions stand side by side with the wildest conjectures.

Homer and Aristotle are pressed into service to prove that the ocean runs round the ~~three old~~ continents, and that America therefore is necessarily an island. The Gulf Stream, which he had carefully observed, eked out by a theory of the *primum mobile*, is made to demonstrate a channel to the north, corresponding to Magellan's Straits in the south, Gilbert believing, in common with almost everyone of his day, that these straits were the only opening into the Pacific, and the land to the South was unbroken to the Pole. He prophesies a market in the East for our manufactured linen and calicoes:

The Easterns greatly prizing the same, as appeareth in Hester, where the pomp is expressed of the great King of India, Ahasuerus, who matched the coloured clothes

wherewith his houses and tents were apparelled, with gold and silver, as part of his greatest treasure.

These and other such arguments were the best analysis which Sir Humfrey had to offer of the spirit which he felt to be working in him. We may think what we please of them; but we can have but one thought of the great grand words with which the memorial concludes, and they alone would explain the love which Elizabeth bore him:

Never, therefore, mislike with me for taking in hand any laudable and honest enterprise, for if through pleasure or idleness we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame abideth for ever.

Give me leave, therefore, without offence, always to live and die in this mind: that he is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal, wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*.

Two voyages which he undertook at his own cost, which shattered his fortune, and failed, as they naturally might, since inefficient help or mutiny of subordinates, or other disorders, are inevitable conditions under which more or less great men must be content to see their great thoughts mutilated by the feebleness of their instruments, did not dishearten him, and in June 1583, a last fleet of five ships sailed from the port of Dartmouth, with commission from the queen to discover and take possession from latitude 45° to 50° North—a voyage not a little noteworthy, there being planted in the course of it the first English colony west of the Atlantic. Elizabeth

had a foreboding that she would never see him again. She sent him a jewel as a last token of her favour, and she desired Raleigh to have his picture taken before he went.

The history of the voyage was written by a Mr Edward Hayes, of Dartmouth, one of the principal actors in it, and as a composition it is more remarkable for fine writing than any very commendable thought in the author. But Sir Humfrey's nature shines through the infirmity of his chronicler; and in the end, indeed, Mr Hayes himself is subdued into a better mind. He had lost money by the voyage, and we will hope his higher nature was only under a temporary eclipse. The fleet consisted (it is well to observe the ships and the size of them) of the *Delight*, 120 tons; the barque *Raleigh*, 200 tons (this ship deserted off the Land's End); the *Golden Hinde* and the *Swallow*, 40 tons each; and the *Squirrel*, which was called the frigate, 10 tons. For the uninitiated in such matters, we may add, that if in a vessel the size of the last, a member of the Yacht Club would consider that he had earned a club-room immortality if he had ventured a run in the depth of summer from Cowes to the Channel Islands.

We were in all (says Mr Hayes) 260 men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice. Besides, for solace of our own people, and allurement of the savages, we were provided of music in good variety, not omitting the least toys, as morris dancers, hobby horses, and May-like conceits to delight the savage people.

The expedition reached Newfoundland without accident. St John's was taken possession of, and a

colony left there; and Sir Humfrey then set out exploring along the American coast to the south, he himself doing all the work in his little 10-ton cutter, the service being too dangerous for the larger vessels to venture on. One of these had remained at St John's. He was now accompanied only by the *Delight* and the *Golden Hinde*, and these two keeping as near the shore as they dared, he spent what remained of the summer examining every creek and bay, marking the soundings, taking the bearings of the possible harbours, and risking his life, as every hour he was obliged to risk it in such a service, in thus leading, as it were, the forlorn hope in the conquest of the New World. How dangerous it was we shall presently see. It was towards the end of August.

The evening was fair and pleasant, yet not without token of storm to ensue, and most part of this Wednesday night, like the swan that singeth before her death, they in the *Delight* continued in sounding of drums and trumpets and fifes, also winding the cornets and hautboys, and in the end of their jollity left with the battell and ringing of doleful knells.

Two days after came the storm; the *Delight* struck upon a bank, and went down in sight of the other vessels, which were unable to render her any help. Sir Humfrey's papers, among other things, were all lost in her; at the time considered by him an irreparable misfortune. But it was little matter, he was never to need them. The *Golden Hinde* and the *Squirrel* were now left alone of the five ships. The provisions were running short, and the summer season was closing. Both crews were on short allowance; and with much difficulty Sir Humfrey was prevailed

upon to be satisfied for the present with what he had done, and to lay off for England.

So upon Saturday, in the afternoon, the 31st of August, we changed our course, and returned back for England, at which very instant, even in winding about, there passed along between us and the land, which we now forsook, a very lion, to our seeming, in shape, hair, and colour; not swimming after the manner of a beast by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body, except his legs, in sight, neither yet diving under and again rising as the manner is of whales, porpoises, and other fish, but confidently showing himself without hiding, notwithstanding that we presented ourselves in open view and gesture to amaze him. Thus he passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with a ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes; and to bidde us farewell, coming right against the *Hinde*, he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld so far as we were able to discern the same, as men prone to wonder at every strange thing. What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *Bonum Omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil.

We have no doubt that he did think it was the devil; men in those days believing really that evil was more than a principle or a necessary accident, and that in all their labour for God and for right, they must make their account to have to fight with the devil in his proper person. But if we are to call it superstition, and if this were no devil in the form of a roaring lion, but a mere great seal or sea-lion, it is a more innocent superstition to impersonate so real a power, and it requires a bolder heart to rise up against it and defy it in its living terror, than to sublimate it away

into a philosophical principle, and to forget to battle with it in speculating on its origin and nature. But to follow the brave Sir Humfrey, whose work of fighting with the devil was now over, and who was passing to his reward. The 2nd of September the General came on board the *Golden Hinde* "to make merry with us." He greatly deplored the loss of his books and papers, but he was full of confidence from what he had seen, and talked with eagerness and warmth of the new expedition for the following spring. Apocryphal gold-mines still occupying the minds of Mr Hayes and others, they were persuaded that Sir Humfrey was keeping to himself some such discovery which he had secretly made, and they tried hard to extract it from him. They could make nothing, however, of his odd, ironical answers, and their sorrow at the catastrophe which followed is sadly blended with disappointment that such a secret should have perished. Sir Humfrey doubtless saw America with other eyes than theirs, and gold-mines richer than California in its huge rivers and savannahs.

Leaving the issue of this good hope (about the gold), (continues Mr Hayes), to God, who only knoweth the truth thereof, I will hasten to the end of this tragedy, which must be knit up in the person of our General, and as it was God's ordinance upon him, even so the vehement persuasion of his friends could nothing avail to divert him from his wilful resolution of going in his frigate; and when he was entreated by the captain, master, and others, his well-wishers in the *Hinde*, not to venture, this was his answer—"I will not forsake my little company going homewards, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils."

Two-thirds of the way home they met foul weather and terrible seas, "breaking short and pyramid-wise." Men who had all their lives "occupied the sea" had never seen it more outrageous. "We had also upon our mainyard an apparition of a little fier by night, which seamen do call Castor and Pollux."

Monday, the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away oppressed by waves, but at that time recovered, and giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out unto us in the *Hinde* so often as we did approach within hearing, "We are as near to heaven by sea as by land," reiterating the same speech, well beseeeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify that he was. The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the *Golden Hinde*, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight; and withal our watch cried, "The General was cast away," which was too true.

Thus faithfully (concludes Mr Hayes, in some degree rising above himself) I have related this story, wherein some spark of the knight's virtues, though he be extinguished, may happily appear; he remaining resolute to a purpose honest and godly as was this, to discover, possess, and reduce unto the service of God and Christian piety, those remote and heathen countries of America. Such is the infinite bounty of God, who from every evil deriveth good, that fruit may grow in time of our travelling in these North-Western lands (as has it not grown?), and the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of the voyage, did correct the intemperate humours which before we noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavoury and less delightful his other manifold virtues.

Thus as he was refined and made nearer unto the image of God, so it pleased the Divine will to resume him unto



Himself, whither both his and every other high and noble mind have always aspired.

Such was Sir Humfrey Gilbert; still in the prime of his years when the Atlantic swallowed him. Like the gleam of a landscape lit suddenly for a moment by the lightning, these few scenes flash down to us across the centuries: but what a life must that have been of which this was the conclusion! We have glimpses of him a few years earlier, when he won his spurs in Ireland—won them by deeds which to us seem terrible in their ruthlessness, but which won the applause of Sir Henry Sidney as too high for praise or even reward. Chequered like all of us with lines of light and darkness, he was nevertheless, one of a race which has ceased to be. We look round for them, and we can hardly believe that the same blood is flowing in our veins. Brave we may still be, and strong perhaps as they, but the high moral grace which made bravery and strength so beautiful is departed from us for ever.

## VII. PUBLIC SPEECHES

The aim of the orator is immediate appeal to the intellect and the emotions by emphasis, the tone, or gesture. Most speeches, therefore, however good, are apt to be ephemeral. Yet the greatest triumphs of speech have lived on in literature. Our history books have recaptured some of the great, memorable sentences that were spoken in times of unwonted crisis and stress. Perhaps the finest of all such in our times was Viscount Grey's observation to a friend on the evening of 3 August, 1914. "The lights are going out all over Europe," he said, "and they will not be lit again in our time." That is an example of a "thumb-nail" speech that becomes immortal by its awful simplicity and truth.

Here are printed three speeches that are representative of three different types of oratory. That by John Bright is a great appeal for peace, spoken upon a great occasion; a fine piece of rhetoric to stir the imagination and move the heart. More argumentative, less emotional, yet in the highest order of speech is Burke's address to Parliament on the subject of Hyder Ali. It is interesting to contrast the speeches of Bright and Burke with the after-dinner whimsicality of Mr Baldwin on so pleasant and familiar a theme as *The Boy's Own Paper*.

### EDMUND BURKE

1729-1797



#### HYDER ALI AND THE CARNATIC

THE great fortunes made in India, in the beginnings of conquest, naturally excited an emulation in all the parts, and through the whole succession of the

company's service. But in the company it gave rise to other sentiments. They did not find the new channel of acquisition flow with equal riches to them. On the contrary, the high flood-tide of private emolument was generally in the lowest ebb of their affairs. They began also to fear, that the fortune of war might take away what the fortune of war had given. Wars were accordingly discouraged by repeated injunctions and menaces; and that the servants might not be bribed into them by the native princes, they were strictly forbidden to take any money whatsoever from their hands. But vehement passion is ingenious in resources. The company's servants were not only stimulated, but better instructed by the prohibition. They soon fell upon a contrivance which answered their purposes far better than the methods which were forbidden; though in this also they violated an ancient, but they thought, an abrogated order. They reversed their proceedings. Instead of receiving presents, they made loans. Instead of carrying on wars in their own name, they contrived an authority, at once irresistible and irresponsible, in whose name they might ravage at pleasure; and being thus freed from all restraint, they indulged themselves in the most extravagant speculations of plunder. The cabal of creditors who have been the object of the late bountiful grant from his majesty's ministers, in order to possess themselves, under the name of creditors and assignees, of every country in India, as fast as it should be conquered, inspired into the mind of the nabob of Arcot (then a dependent on the company of the humblest order) a scheme of the most wild and desperate ambition, that

I believe ever was admitted into the thoughts of a man so situated. First, they persuaded him to consider himself as a principal member in the political system of Europe. In the next place they held out to him, and he readily imbibed, the idea of the general empire of Hindostan. As a preliminary to this undertaking, they prevailed on him to propose a tripartite division of that vast country. One part to the company; another to the Marattas; and the third to himself. To himself he reserved all the southern part of the great peninsula, comprehended under the general name of the Decan.

On this scheme of their servants, the company was to appear in the Carnatic in no other light than as a contractor for the provision of armies, and the hire of mercenaries for his use, and under his direction. This disposition was to be secured by the nabob's putting himself under the guarantee of France, and, by the means of that rival nation, preventing the English for ever from assuming an equality, much less a superiority in the Carnatic. In pursuance of this treasonable project (treasonable on the part of the English) they extinguished the company as a sovereign power in that part of India; they withdrew the company's garrisons out of all the forts and strongholds of the Carnatic; they declined to receive the ambassadors from foreign courts, and remitted them to the nabob of Arcot; they fell upon, and totally destroyed, the oldest ally of the company, the king of Tanjore, and plundered the country to the amount of near five millions sterling; one after another, in the nabob's name, but with English force, they brought into a

miserable servitude all the princes, and great, independent nobility, of a vast country. In proportion to these treasons and violences, which ruined the people, the fund of the nabob's debt grew and flourished.

Among the victims to this magnificent plan of universal plunder, worthy of the heroic avarice of the projectors, you have all heard (and he has made himself to be well remembered) of an Indian chief called Hyder Ali Khan. This man possessed the western, as the company under the name of the nabob of Arcot does the eastern division of the Carnatic. It was among the leading measures in the design of this cabal (according to their own emphatic language) to *extirpate* this Hyder Ali. They declared the nabob of Arcot to be his sovereign, and himself to be a rebel, and publicly invested their instrument with the sovereignty of the kingdom of Mysore. But their victim was not of the passive kind. They were soon obliged to conclude a treaty of peace and close alliance with this rebel, at the gates of Madras. Both before and since this treaty, every principle of policy pointed out this power as a natural alliance; and on his part, it was courted by every sort of amicable office. But the cabinet council of English creditors would not suffer their nabob of Arcot to sign the treaty, nor even to give to a prince, at least his equal, the ordinary titles of respect and courtesy. From that time forward, a continued plot was carried on within the divan, black and white, of the nabob of Arcot, for the destruction of Hyder Ali. As to the outward members of the double, or rather treble government of Madras,

which had signed the treaty, they were always prevented by some overruling influence (which they do not describe, but which cannot be misunderstood) from performing what justice and interest combined so evidently to enforce.

When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty, and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those, against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy, and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation, into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its

contents upon the plains of the Carnatic—then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of, were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity, in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest, fled to the walled cities. But escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal; and all was done by charity that private charity could do; but it was a people in beggary; it was a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austere fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by a hundred a day in the streets of Madras; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow-citizens, by bringing before you

some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes the nearest to our heart, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is: but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum; these details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting; they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers; they are so humiliating to human nature itself, that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.

For eighteen months, without intermission, this destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore; and so completely did these masters in their art, Hyder Ali, and his more ferocious son, absolve themselves of their impious vow, that when the British armies traversed, as they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever. One dead, uniform silence reigned over the whole region. With the inconsiderable exceptions of the narrow vicinage of some few forts, I wish to be understood as speaking literally;—I mean to produce to you more than three witnesses, above all exception, who will support this assertion in its full extent. That hurricane of war passed through every part of the central provinces of the Carnatic. Six or seven districts to the north and to the south (and these not wholly untouched) escaped the general ravage.



The Carnatic is a country not much inferior in extent to England. Figure to yourself, Mr Speaker, the land in whose representative chair you sit; figure to yourself the form and fashion of your sweet and cheerful country from Thames to Trent, north and south, and from the Irish to the German sea, east and west, emptied and embowelled (may God avert the omen of our crimes!) by so accomplished a desolation. Extend your imagination a little farther, and then suppose your ministers taking a survey of this scene of waste and desolation; what would be your thoughts if you should be informed that they were computing how much had been the amount of the excises, how much the customs, how much the land and malt tax, in order that they should charge (take it in the most favourable light) for public service, upon the relics of the satiated vengeance of relentless enemies, the whole of what England had yielded in the most exuberant seasons of peace and abundance? What would you call it? To call it tyranny sublimed into madness, would be too faint an image; yet this very madness is the principle upon which the ministers at your right hand have proceeded in their estimate of the revenues of the Carnatic, when they were providing, not supply for the establishment of its protection, but rewards for the authors of its ruin.

## JOHN BRIGHT

1811-1889

## THE ANGEL OF DEATH

[On 22 February, 1855 Lord Palmerston announced in the House of Commons that Mr Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Sidney Herbert, the Colonial Secretary, Mr Cardwell, the President of the Board of Trade, and Sir James Graham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had resigned the offices which they had accepted a fortnight before. The ground of this secession was the impression entertained by the above-named personages that the Committee of Inquiry moved for by Mr Roebuck was equivalent to a vote of censure on them, as they had formed part of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, whose conduct of the Russian War was impugned by the appointment of the Committee. The places vacated by these secessions were filled up on February 28.]

Whatever may be said about the honour of the country in any other relation involved in this affair, this, at least, I expect every man who hears me to admit—that if terms of peace have been offered they have been offered in good faith, and shall be in honour and good faith adhered to; so that if, unfortunately for Europe and humanity, there should be any failure at Vienna, no man should point to the English Government and to the authorities and rulers of this Christian country, and say that we have prolonged the war and the infinite calamities of which it is the cause.

I have said that I was anxious that the Government

of the noble Lord should not be overthrown. Will the House allow me to say why I am so? The noble Lord at the head of the Government has long been a great authority with many persons in this country upon foreign policy. His late colleague, and present envoy to Vienna, has long been a great authority with a large portion of the people of this country upon almost all political questions. With the exception of that unhappy selection of an ambassador at Constantinople, I hold that there are no men in this country more truly responsible for our present position in this war than the noble Lord who now fills the highest office in the State and the noble Lord who is now, I trust, rapidly approaching the scene of his labours in Vienna. I do not say this now to throw blame upon those noble Lords, because their policy, which I hold to be wrong, they, without doubt, as firmly believe to be right; but I am only stating facts. It has been their policy that they have entered into war for certain objects, and I am sure that neither the noble Lord at the head of the Government nor his late colleague the noble Lord the Member for London will shrink from the responsibility which attaches to them. Well, Sir, now we have those noble Lords in a position which is, in my humble opinion, favourable to the termination of the troubles which exist. I think that the noble Lord at the head of the Government himself would have more influence in stilling whatever may exist of clamour in this country than any other Member of this House. I think, also, that the noble Lord the Member for London would not have undertaken the mission to Vienna if he had not entertained some

strong belief that, by so doing, he might bring the war to an end. Nobody gains reputation by a failure in negotiation, and as that noble Lord is well acquainted with the whole question from beginning to end, I entertain a hope—I will not say a sanguine hope—that the result of that mission to Vienna will be to bring about a peace, to extricate this country from some of those difficulties inseparable from a state of war.

There is one subject upon which I should like to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I shall not say one word here about the state of the army in the Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every Member of this House, every inhabitant of this country, has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands—nay, scores of thousands of persons—have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I should like to ask the noble Lord at the head of the Government—although I am not sure if he will feel that he can or ought to answer the question—whether the noble Lord the Member for London has power, after discussions have commenced, and as soon as there shall be established good grounds for believing that the negotiations for peace will prove successful, to enter into any armistice? (“No! no!”)

I know not, Sir, who it is that says “No, no,” but I should like to see any man get up and say that the destruction of 200,000 human lives lost on all sides

during the course of this unhappy conflict is not a sufficient sacrifice. You are not pretending to conquer territory—you are not pretending to hold fortified or unfortified towns; you have offered terms of peace which, as I understand them, I do not say are not moderate; and breathes there a man in this House or in this country whose appetite for blood is so insatiable that, even when terms of peace have been offered and accepted, he pines for that assault in which of Russian, Turk, French and English, as sure as one man dies, 20,000 corpses will strew the streets of Sebastopol? I say I should like to ask the noble Lord—and I am sure that he will feel, and that this House will feel, that I am speaking in no unfriendly manner towards the Government of which he is at the head—I should like to know, and I venture to hope that it is so, if the noble Lord the Member for London has power, at the earliest stage of these proceedings at Vienna, at which it can properly be done—and I should think that it might properly be done at a very early stage—to adopt a course by which all further waste of human life may be put an end to, and further animosity between three great nations be, as far as possible, prevented?

I appeal to the noble Lord at the head of the Government and to this House; I am not now complaining of the war—I am not now complaining of the terms of peace, nor, indeed, of anything that has been done—but I wish to suggest to this House what, I believe, thousands, and tens of thousands, of the most educated and of the most Christian portion of the people of this country are feeling upon

this subject, although indeed, in the midst of a certain clamour in the country, they do not give public expression to their feelings. Your country is not in an advantageous state at this moment; from one end of the kingdom to another there is a general collapse of industry. Those Members of this House not intimately acquainted with the trade and commerce of the country do not fully comprehend our position as to the diminution of employment and the lessening of wages. An increase in the cost of living is finding its way to the homes and hearts of a vast number of the labouring population.

At the same time there is growing up—and, notwithstanding what some hon. Members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do—a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or of the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to Gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to anyone I meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea;

but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord, that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years a member of this House. Before I was born, he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the

satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition: that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved his country from the indescribable calamities of war.

## STANLEY BALDWIN

1867—

## THE ETERNAL BOY

This is a unique occasion. There is no one who has a more profound regard for the great British Press than I have, and yet it seems to me that it would be difficult to imagine, even when the jubilee of the *Daily Mail* was being celebrated, that a gathering should be drawn together by the affection to the paper and to its Editors that brings us all together to celebrate the jubilee of the *Boy's Own Paper*. When the day comes for that later jubilee will there be such testimonials from the great ones of the earth as we have to-day? Even Eton, that looks with such kindly tolerance on all that lies outside its immediate ambit, writes in the person of its headmaster that he has a



very vague but kindly recollection of the *Boy's Own Paper*. Westminster and Harrow, in the sterner spirit of the coming democracy, say that their recollection is vivid and their gratitude is vivid, too: and the headmaster of Harrow pays his tribute to Talbot Baines Reed. We have also—and I rejoice that he is with us to-day—that grand old man, Lord Meath.

We have the Leader of the Labour Party using a phrase I rejoice in. He says: "Many a gorgeous hour of happiness came to me from the *Boy's Own Paper*." There are few papers to which one could without exaggeration apply that expression. Last, but not least, I see my colleagues in serried rows acknowledging the debt they owed to it in their youth. The Home Secretary in the days of childhood little thought, when he made rabbit hutches and fowl pens and kept pets, that he was going to have his own hutches on Broadmoor and at Wormwood Scrubbs, and that he was going to keep his pets in Borstal.

It is a great occasion, and it must be an occasion of reminiscence, because those of us who remember the *Boy's Own Paper* from its inception are now getting among the elders, and to us it is difficult to describe the pleasure that we felt on seeing the cover of the paper when we came into the room. Every figure tells its story, and little did I think when I first used to look at it—if I may quote the powerful expression of the headmaster of Westminster—with avidity, how applicable it would be to my later years. I see myself in the middle, at the top of a greasy pole—a

precarious position. I see myself on the right angling—what for? and, on the left, taking a plunge into the waters—of dissolution. A little lower down on the right I am taking a fence I shall get over, but the stile does not make for speed. On the left, I am hurling objurgations, at the bottom I skate over thin ice, and in the middle I am pulling, I trust, my weight in a boat. The left-hand bottom picture is more a picture of mystery than any of the others; it looks like snowballing.

Those of us who have been brought up on the *Boy's Own Paper* fill our snowballs with neither stones nor glass. We cannot meet to-day without saying a word to those to whom we owed so much. I shall say nothing about your great editor—that is for another speaker—but we cannot forget Talbot Baines Reed and his stories. We cannot forget Kingston, Jules Verne, Ballantyne, and Dr Gordon Stables. I would say a word of congratulation to Mr Gordon on the work he did, and congratulate him on being able to write under a number of aliases. I often wish I could speak under an alias; I would make speeches that would move the country. Of the present-day writers I forbear to make special mention; I confine myself to those of the past, and I think perhaps with peculiar affection of some of those who were great names to us boys, but only wrote occasionally on their own subjects. Among them I remember Captain Webb, Mr Maskelyne, Mr Edward Whymper, and last, but not least, in any way, Dr W. G. Grace. Webb I remember with peculiar sympathy, because he came from near my own county and learned to swim

in the Severn. Maskelyne I always remember, because after I had given up all hope in the earliest days of excelling as a circus rider, I thought I might make a conjurer. Whympers I remember from his account of the first ascent of the Matterhorn, which was the first Alpine story I ever read.

But Grace! No one of this generation can ever realise what W. G. Grace was to the boys of the 'seventies and early 'eighties. Stories about Grace are legion, and they have passed into legend. There is a short one I often remember because it contains, as the short sayings of great men so often do, a profound truth adaptable to every circumstance in life. It is possible that the Lord Mayor of London remembers this. There was a discussion one night after a match in which the greatest bowler of the day had been engaged and had done deadly work, and no one had been able to play him that day except Grace. They were talking over the way this peculiarly deadly ball ought to be played, and having seen that Grace had played it without fail, they asked him how it was done. Grace looked at them, and said: "You put the bat against the bahl." After all, it is as good a way of playing in politics as in any other field.

But the wonder of the *Boy's Own Paper* is not that it delighted us when we were young, not that it provided such wonderful fare for us, but that it has gone on all these years carrying out that great work, and is carrying it out to-day. I am ashamed to think of the gaps in my knowledge between those early days and to-day. I am afraid, if confession, which is the fashion to-day, has to be made, I am of news-

papers, as the headmaster of Westminster would say, *Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens*. But I was rejoiced to find that the *Boy's Own Paper* is going strong to-day, and I have read with great interest almost every word of the number that was sent to me to show what it was doing. I missed the old cover and yet I liked the phrase that occurs here: "The *Boy's Own Paper*, for boys of all ages."

I like that because I always think one of the great charms of my sex is that the best of us remain boys to the end. How often you see two old gentlemen, perhaps lame and crippled with gout, as I shall be soon, leaving their club late at night, and one says to the other, "Come along, old boy." Have you ever heard two old ladies going home and saying to one another, "Come along, old girl"? We men have our faults, but the secret of eternal boyhood is in us, in our feelings, and possibly sometimes in our manners and in our customs.

There is one other thing that made me feel that though the years go by, nothing really alters. That was the advertisements. The advertisements might all have appeared *mutatis mutandis* in 1879. The majority of them deal with stamps. It has been said by one great man in an autobiographical work that when he was a child he knew the exchange value of every marble in his native village. I knew the exchange value of every stamp in 1879. But there is something better, deeper, and beyond stamps. It is unmistakable and could only have appeared in the *Boy's Own Paper*. I rejoice to find that in this age of progress the advertisement is here to-day. "Stink

bombs. Just drop one. 3d." And, most mysterious of all, without any illustrations as to its effect: "Itching powder. 3d." That shows, I think, that the boys who are nurtured on the *Boy's Own Paper* will turn out men and neither prudes nor prigs.

The eternal boy remains the same. The *Boy's Own Paper*, while giving him fodder of all kinds, has succeeded with infinite skill in avoiding Scylla and Charybdis. It has not turned him into a prig or a prude. It has given him intellectual interests without turning him into an intellectual. Perhaps best of all, it keeps up to-day, as it did at its inception, that spirit of adventure which is the most essential part of the normal and healthy boy, and without which the man sinks into a player for safety or one who looks after his own average, and we do not want either of them in the big world that lies beyond the school.

So it was that, when I received this invitation to come and bestow, for what it may be worth, my blessing on this paper, I made a point of doing it. I have come here to-day with a sincere and great pleasure, and with all my heart I wish every success to those who conduct this great undertaking to-day. I should like to offer to the editor my warmest congratulations, if it be not an impertinence, on the way in which he occupies that chair—a most worthy successor of a great editor who went before him, and to hope that his tenure may be as long and distinguished. I feel confident that the work of the *Boy's Own Paper* will never flag or fail in his hands; and when I put to you "Prosperity to the *Boy's Own*

*Paper*," as the principal toast of this great gathering, I ask you to drink it with acclamation—the older ones of us with happy memories and great gratitude, the younger ones in full enjoyment of the paper as it exists to-day, and all of us with full and fresh hope for the future.

## VIII. A NOTE ON THE NOVEL

ARIOUS types of prose literature have been represented in this book; but there are no extracts from the most familiar type of all—the novel, simply because it would be invidious to represent one novelist or even one novel and to neglect the vast wealth of material which might have been used. Besides, every reader has his favourite among the novelists and so will readily supply from his own books all that can be needed to illustrate this note. The story, whether in prose or in verse, has always existed because it is by the story that we are most easily interested. It is, therefore, a little startling to realise that the novel proper was not written in English until towards the end of the eighteenth century. For a novel is more than a story, or romance. It is made up of many and varied elements, as an organ combines in itself a whole orchestra of musical instruments.

Evolution in literature is as slow and gradual as it is in nature. Before the novel could really come into being, the language in which it was to be written had itself to be perfected. Yet up to the time of Shakespeare there had been no definite style in prose-writing. We may remember how in such a book as Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (c. 1470) the sentences are loosely constructed, and, though in themselves often quaint and beautiful, quite lacking in form and unity. It was during the seventeenth century that men began to beat, as it were, the amorphous mass of prose into

shape. Shakespeare himself, whose plays contain beautiful passages in prose as well as in verse, had a hand in it; Bacon, who introduced the essay-form into English, and Dryden the poet, who was also a fine critic, by using prose for matter-of-fact description and argument rescued it from the spell of the fantastic that had bewitched it before the seventeenth century. With the stabilising of prose came the writing of types of literature that were to help in the final building up of the novel—essays, criticism, letters, diaries, “characters,” history. These all contributed something, and by the very beginning of the eighteenth century three great books had been written which, while not being themselves true novels, represent that last development before the novel became a perfect whole. These three books are *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels*. As novels in our modern sense of the term, they all lack something; but they all have the essential element of a story, and in the first there are the beginnings of characterisation. Above all, they are written in the direct workaday prose that is the vital breath of a novel; the first in the simple language of a tinker, lifted up to the beautiful dignity of the Bible; the second in the practical business-like style of a journalist and political writer, and the third in the most wonderful prose ever written in English because it has the incisive “biting” simplicity of the scholar.

The true novels that lie immediately over the threshold on which these three books stand—that is the novels written and published during the middle



years of the eighteenth century—need not concern us just now. We may remember that Dickens describes how David Copperfield, as a boy, discovered some old books in an attic and read them with an avidity that he afterwards shared with his friend Steerforth in the dormitory at Salem House: *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Flanny Clinker*, *Tom Jones*. They were all by the first great English novelists—Fielding and Smollett—and they had a strong influence later on Dickens' own work. But we may pass on to the end of the century to Sir Walter Scott, the first of the novelists whose books can really make an appeal to us. It will be well at the outset to recognise the important fact that novels may be divided into two main types:

(i) The *Romantic*: that is the novels whose subject is removed from everyday life as the author knew it.

(ii) The *Realistic*: that is the novels which were, in some measure at least, the novelist's picture of the men and women about him, and his narrative of their deeds.

Even before Scott's time the romantic novel had become the rage of both writers and readers. In her book *Northanger Abbey*, which was itself a parody on the wild romances of her time, Jane Austen pictures the eager excitement of the elegant young ladies at the ghosts, dungeons, ruined castles and clanging doors that characterised such stories as Mrs Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The truth is that novelists always have written and always will write what we call nowadays "thrillers" because there is something in most of us that responds to them. One of the most

likeable books in English—a book to hold children from their play and old men from the chimney-corner as Sidney said—was written by Robert Louis Stevenson to thrill a boy who loved pirates.

However, we will leave them to their own delights and turn to the “romantic” novel in its most solemn and dignified form—that is the novel whose events are based on history. Historical fact, mingled with legend, had always held a high place as a subject for literature—in the old romances of Arthur, in the long narrative poems of the Middle Ages, later on, in Shakespeare’s plays, and later still in Sir Walter Scott’s poems. But Scott suddenly forsook verse for prose, and turned his great power of telling a story into another channel. He lived on the borders of England and Scotland, the romantic No Man’s Land of our early history; and the atmosphere of his home had kindled in him a great delight in the past, that was enhanced by his fine imagination. So, when he had finished with the facile and often stirring couplets of his poems, he began a series of prose romances (or “novels”) based on some of the outstanding events or historical periods of the past. For a long time he concealed his authorship, and the novels (often preceded by a kind of “fictitious” introduction) were simply called the “Waverley Novels.” It is interesting to remember that Scott wrote some of the novels to pay off a debt incurred by the publishing firm with which he was connected. With fine nobility and self-sacrifice (for he wrote often when he was in great physical pain) he worked unceasingly till all the creditors were paid. Scott is, indeed, one of the

gallant gentlemen of literature; his own fine spirit is revealed at every turn in the novels. To us his descriptions often seem tedious, and especially at the beginning, the stories seem to move slowly. We shall always be tempted to think Scott "uninteresting," especially in the first chapters where he clears the way for the later romance of his narrative. But, once we have acquired the patience to follow his studied descriptions, we are certain to find in the "Waverley Novels" the real glamour that belongs to a story of heroism and adventure, love and war. The familiar figures of the history-book walk up and down their pages—Richard Cœur de Lion in *The Talisman*, King John in *Ivanhoe*, Queen Elizabeth in *Kenilworth*, Cromwell in *Woodstock*, James I in *The Fortunes of Nigel*. In the Scottish tales, where the author himself was most at home, the portraiture is even surer than it is in the English. *Rob Roy*, *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian*, his three greatest tales of Scottish history, are beautiful with the simple drama of speech, the pathos and humour of his own dialect. And it is not only the great characters that interest us. Scott had a genuine love for his fellows, and especially for his fellow-countrymen; a love which he translated into many a sketch of those minor characters that he created out of his own imagination. There are the rollicking soldiers like Wildrake in *Woodstock*, great simple souls like Cuddie Headrigg and his Mother in *Old Mortality*, Jeannie Deans in *The Heart of Midlothian*, and Edie Ochiltree in *The Antiquary*. There is something of Shakespearean pathos and humour in Scott's delineation of such folk as these; a

peculiar dramatic art in portraying their circumstances and conversation that makes us feel we have a Bully Bottom or a Peter Quince back again, yet speaking in a strange northern tongue. In this way, too, he linked himself across a century or so to that later novelist who only now and then concerned himself with history, and then only with one great epic period that he seemed to make peculiarly his own. By an odd paradox *The Antiquary*, Scott's only true non-historical novel, has for its closest parallel in literature Thomas Hardy's only historical novel, *The Trumpet-Major*. Scott describes, with a half-satirical yet tender humour flickering round Monkbarns and Edie Ochiltree, the stirring events of his own day, while Hardy, writing sixty years afterwards, learns (as he himself tells us in his preface) from the reminiscent tales of old men and women the humours of volunteer drill, the great scare of Boney, and the wonderful drama of the sailing of the *Victory*. The two books should be read together, so that one may be the interpretation of the other.

The nineteenth century has a few other outstanding historical novels. Perhaps the one most conforming to our idea of romance is Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*, a stirring tale of sea-adventure in Elizabeth's time. It has long, rather arid passages, where Kingsley forgets he is telling a story and begins to preach a sermon instead; moreover it is not a good historical novel, because its whole "atmosphere" and indeed its characters are of the nineteenth century rather than the sixteenth. But it is, for all that, a fine story to stir the heart and imagination. There are one or

two other romantic tales that touch upon different periods of history. Kingsley himself wrote a fine novel of early times in *Hereward the Wake*; and Lord Lytton, whose *Last Days of Pompeii* is an interesting reconstruction of life and love in that doomed and ancient city, pictured the battle between Saxon and Norman in *Harold*. The Monmouth Rebellion inspired two outstanding novels: *Lorna Doone*, by R. D. Blackmore, a book whose lilting rhythmic prose, sturdy characterisation, and tender love-interest have given it so secure a place in fiction that we have become accustomed to speak of parts of Devonshire as "the Doone country"; and *Micah Clarke*, a slighter but thrilling tale, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. *The Tower of London* and *Old St Paul's* are fine stories of London history by Harrison Ainsworth. There are, too, modern historical novels that are well worth reading—particularly those by Miss Marjorie Bowen, who is an authority on the times of William of Orange. Somewhat apart from these stands one great historical novel of Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*. With that strange effect of which he was a master, Dickens pictures the footsteps, echoing first in the silence of a London square, and afterwards in a fearful crescendo round the guillotine in Paris. His characters live and move in the shadow of the Terror, until the most worthless of them all redeems his mis-spent life by going to death for his friend. There is hardly any more dramatic scene in our literature than that in which Sydney Carton walks to the crashing guillotine, and the knitting-women count "Twenty-three." In great contrast to Dickens' quick and moving story is

Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*. It is a wonderful book, though a difficult one to read. The story is of Queen Anne's reign, and the intrigues of the exiled Stuarts. In it Thackeray has drawn marvellous pen-pictures of men who are great in our literature—Joseph Addison, the poet and "Spectator" who loves to drink his ale and recite his poetry; Dick Steele, the rollicking swaggering soldier, who could write an essay with the best; and the famous Dr Swift who struck terror into them all and had the whole town at his feet. The book is written in a prose into which, as by a miracle, Thackeray infused the very spirit of the eighteenth century. His even more famous book *Vanity Fair*, while it is not strictly an historical novel, rises to its climax in a great episode of our history—the battle of Waterloo. There are some books whose interest is less romantic than historical; that is, instead of describing under cover of fiction some of the exciting events of history, their authors have aimed rather at creating the "atmosphere" of a period. The greatest of them—*Henry Esmond*—has already been mentioned. Perhaps next to it would come Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*—a novel recounting a stupendous number of astounding adventures, but reflecting the dying glamour and superstition of the Middle Ages as well as the coming of the New Learning to Europe. Its last page tells us that the child of the hero and the heroine was none other than the great Erasmus. This book, for all its length, will probably hold us far more than "George Eliot's" novel on a similar theme—*Romola*. It is, to say the truth, a somewhat wooden and uninspiring

story whose chief interest lies in its study of the character of Savonarola. One or two novels treat of the industrial problems that beset England in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the best and greatest of them is Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, a stirring tale concerning the introduction of machinery into Yorkshire. A lesser known writer, Mrs Craik, treated of the same theme in *John Halifax, Gentleman*, a novel that has an indefinable attraction. Dickens' novels are strewn with references to the fast changing world in which he lived: perhaps the most interesting of them all is in *Dombey and Son*, where he pictures Toodle, the engine-driver, and describes the death of Mr Carker under the wheels of the fiery monster that had supplanted the stage-coach. So in our day both Mr H. G. Wells and Mr Galsworthy have written novels with the General Strike of 1926 as an important incident in the story; and many other authors have written novels against the background of the Great War. But these last novels are, after all, not so much "romantic" or "historical" as realistic; they belong, that is, to the other group which has been defined earlier on in this note. In the realistic novel the author describes not life in some imaginative historical or romantic setting, but life as he himself sees it day by day. Scott once said in praise of Jane Austen that while Europe was shaking with the guns of the Napoleonic wars she contented herself with painting her miniatures of the slow, quiet life of her familiar English villages and towns. She watched with observant and humorous eyes the men and women about her of that upper middle class which she

knew through and through; and we go to her greatest novels—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*—not for the thrill of a plot, but for delicate satirical analysis of the tiny loves and hates, conventions and prejudices, flirtations and elopements that made up the drama of the country houses in which her heroines, their suitors, their mothers and their fathers lived, or in the ball-rooms in what one of Mr Hardy's rustics called "the great kingdom of Bath." She had a Shakespearean gift for characterisation, and the genius to group her perfect etchings in an artistic whole. It may be that her subtlety will at first evade us; for it is not easy to appreciate her work. But once the appreciation comes, we shall probably join that army of admirers ("Janeites" as they like to call themselves) who consider her to be the greatest of all English novelists. There are a few women of the later nineteenth century who are perhaps lesser than Jane Austen; but some, at least, of their novels we should read. Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* has already been referred to. She and her sisters, Emily and Anne, wrote a number of novels inspired by their own rather sad and gloomy life on the Yorkshire moors. Anne's book *Agnes Grey* would have been long forgotten but for her sisters' fame; *Wuthering Heights*, a great and terrible work by Emily, is a novel to be read and appreciated in later years, as is Charlotte's *Villette*, in which she portrays, under the guise of fiction, the passion of her own love-story.<sup>1</sup> Another woman writer, Mrs Gaskell, has given us not only a famous biography of Charlotte Brontë, but also a

<sup>1</sup> See *Selections from the Brontës*, Cambridge University Press.



beautiful novel, *Cranford*, whose whimsical and tender humour recalls a Jane Austen robbed of her subtlest satire.

"George Eliot," the author of *Romola*, found her first inspiration in the English countryside. *The Mill on the Floss* is an interesting, though somewhat sentimental book; but *Silas Marner*, a beautiful character-study set in a story that reveals her simple and naive humour, remains one of the great novels of the language. It is interesting to read in connection with it Thomas Hardy's similar but less serious story of country life, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, perhaps the most delightful of all his novels.

The two "giants" of the nineteenth century, Dickens and Thackeray, have lost a little of their power to-day. To neglect them, and even sneer at them is, however, only a passing fashion that arises, for the most part, out of ignorance of their works. The length of Dickens' novels, the over-crowding of their characters and caricatures, the loose and careless intricacy of their plots, all spoil his appeal to us who have grown accustomed to a shorter, more direct type of novel. But Dickens' picture-gallery is a great one still. Its best pictures are those of the poor and lowly, and they are always greatest when their setting or background is London. Dickens knew London through and through—its humour, its pathos, its eternal movement and change. The London he knew and the England he knew we know no longer: little more than half a century has transformed them both beyond recognition. But the romance of a near-by past lingers in Dickens as in no other writer—the

stage-coach and the coachmen, Christmas revels, old shops in London, old business-houses, toll-gates on the road, ostlers and inns, the beginnings of the railway train. Evil things are there, too, held up to scorn and bitter attacks by Dickens the Reformer—the law's delays (in *Bleak House*), the private schools of the time (in *Nicholas Nickleby*), the scandal of the workhouses (in *Oliver Twist*), and the demoralisation of the debtors' prison (in *Little Dorrit*). But all these things are incidental to that splendid humour, that tremendous gusto, with which Dickens drew his characters. He laughed sometimes too blatantly, and wept sometimes too copiously; he was apt so to exaggerate a peculiarity of his characters as to make them caricatures. We know them—great and wonderful pictures—almost by their labels; Mr Micawber waiting for something to turn up; Uriah Heap always "so 'umble"; Sam and Tony Weller; Mr Bumble; Silas Wegg dropping into poetry; Dick Swiveller; the one-eyed educationist Squeers; Captain Cuttle and Joe Gargery. The great books are to be read at leisure, tasted as it were, by the fireside. Perhaps of them all we should turn most often to three: *Pickwick Papers*, the sparkling medley that made Dickens famous at twenty-four; *David Copperfield*, Dickens' own favourite novel, because it was wrought out of the stuff of his own life, and *Great Expectations*, one of his latest books, when the humour and pathos had come (as they should come) very near together, in a beautiful and moving story.

Dickens never succeeded in portraying the life of the upper classes; that was left to Thackeray, who

wrote with brilliant satire while Dickens was dealing in sentiment and reform. Two of Thackeray's books—perhaps his greatest—have already been referred to. *Vanity Fair* is a witty, sometimes merciless, picture of life at the beginning of the century, and is particularly interesting because of its reference to the war with Napoleon. *Pendennis* is a book we may promise ourselves for later reading.

Of the later novelists there is not much to be said here. When we have read as many as possible of the novels that have been mentioned in this chapter it will be time to turn to the scintillating, if sometimes obscure books of George Meredith—particularly *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and *Evan Harrington*. Then we shall have for our delight the "Barsetshire" novels of Anthony Trollope and the "Wessex" novels of one of the greatest of English writers, Thomas Hardy. Nor, when we shall have read *Treasure Island* and still linger under the spell of Stevenson should we neglect to turn to his other novels—*Kidnapped*, *Catriona*, and *St Ives*.

Our guide to the novels that are being written to-day should be a good weekly literary magazine. It is well to remember that there are novelists still on the earth, and that the novel is a living thing; and to read a magazine intelligently, to cull from it suggestions for our reading in the literature of our own times, is in itself an education.

## IX. EXERCISES

### I. THE ESSAY

1. In the first essay of the group you will find the phrase "itinerant singing-master." What does *itinerant* mean? Trace its derivation from the Latin. Find a dozen other unfamiliar words in this group of essays whose meaning you could deduce from their Latin roots.

2. Try to find explanations of the following:

- (a) He calls the sea the British Common.
- (b) And takes a turn at Will's until the play begins.
- (c) I find the caravan has not yet departed for China.
- (d) There are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it.
- (e) Ex ungue Herculem.
- (f) And thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old.
- (g) The interest in Plantagenets and Tudors is not what it was in the Marylebone Road.
- (h) The very fire that melted whole dynasties above left their effigies and relics untouched.

3. It is clear that the two essays "The Spectator Club" and "A Description of a Club of Authors" have similar themes. Which of the two do you prefer, and why? Which two characters described in the essays interest you most, and why?

4. "Most people think him [Doctor Nonentity] a profound scholar; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular."

Quote any other instances of satire you can find in these essays.

5. "The essay laughs or is sad." Try to illustrate this statement by references to the essays printed here.

6. In "The Superannuated Man" Charles Lamb reveals many of his own characteristics. Describe him as you would imagine him to be from his own revelation in this essay.

7. Give a suitable title to each paragraph of the essay "At Madame Tussaud's," and thus obtain a plan or skeleton of the essay.

8. Imagine that your own form at school is a Spectator or Literary Club. Choose four or five of its members and try to sketch their characters.

9. After reading "The Superannuated Man" describe your own feelings on the first day of the summer holiday.

10. If you have visited Madame Tussaud's, write a description of the things that interested you there; if not, write of a visit to some other exhibition.

## II. THE LETTER

1. Find in the letters the references to the following books, and say briefly what you know about each book and its author: *Treasure Island*; Pope's *Odyssey*; The Poems of Ossian; *Macbeth*; Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*; *Gulliver's Travels*.

2. Which of these letters reveals best (a) "homeliness"; (b) a sense of indignation; (c) a power of description; (d) a sense of humour; (e) wit?

3. Write explanatory notes on each of the following:

(a) If the world had but a dozen Arbuthnots in it, I would burn my *Travels*.

(b) I have an ill name, and therefore shall not subscribe it.

(c) The invention of "ingrafting."

(d) 10 Jan. O.S. 1749.

(e) Which is verified in this town to a tittle.

(f) Refresh my spirits by a little intercourse with the Mantuan and the Sabine bard.

(g) Look back, Davy, to Lichfield.

(h) Mary called you our ventilator.

(i) The "Sea Cook" may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

4. Write your opinion of *Treasure Island*. "Of course I'm fooling," says Stevenson in this letter. Was he? Why was the title of the book changed?

5. It is often said that the art of letter-writing has died out in these days. Can you give any reasons? Write a brief essay on the subject.

6. The letter is the most *familiar* of all styles of writing. Illustrate this by quoting from the letters given here.

7. Write a brief note on each of the authors of these letters and (if possible) add a reference to any other of their writings.

8. Try the following exercises:

(a) A letter from Mr Pope to Dean Swift on the subject of Lilliput.

(b) A further letter from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in which she describes the operation of *ingrafting* on her "dear little son."

(c) A letter from William Temple to Dorothy Osborne concerning her "little idle commissions."

(d) The Earl of Chesterfield's son's answer to his father's letter.

(e) After reading of Gray's studies at college write a similar letter in which you describe your studies at school.

(f) Make a plan of Walpole's house at Strawberry Hill.

(g) Imagine that William Cowper lived today and possessed a motor-car. Write a letter in which he comments on motor-car taxation.

(h) "I received your foolish and impudent letter." Imagine and write the letter Macpherson might have sent in reply.

(i) Imagine a conversation between Boswell and Johnson, as they stand in view of Macbeth's castle.

- (k) Imagine and write a letter from Thomas Manning in China to Charles and Mary Lamb.
- (l) Interpret all the jokes in Thomas Hood's letter.
- (m) Write a letter to R. L. Stevenson suggesting a new thrill for *Treasure Island*.
- (n) Write a letter to a friend, describing the recent stage production of *Treasure Island*.

### III. BIOGRAPHY

1. Find the following words and phrases in the first extract, determine their meaning and use each of them in sentences of your own: *impartial, satiety, canonical, he returned so habited, precedence, necessitous, did so compassionate her, after which comfortable speech, with which she was so affected*. Are there any phrases that would not be used today? Show how the word *comfortable* is here used in its original sense. How do we use it today?

2. Dr Johnson is noted for his Latinised English. Choose twenty words from the passage printed here which have a Latin origin. Substitute simple Saxon words or phrases for each of the twenty.

3. "I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his [Johnson's] conversation," says Boswell. Wherein do you think this extraordinary vigour consists?

4. In the passage by Southey there is a number of anecdotes of Nelson. Give a title to each of them. Tell the outline of one of these stories in as few words as possible. Place the anecdotes in what you consider to be the order of their interest.

5. Write sentences in which you sum up the main characteristics of each of the men whose lives are touched upon in these passages. Try to use your adjectives with discretion.

6. Suppose you wanted to write a verse or a motto over your mantel-piece. What would you choose? Why?

7. "*Lycidas*—of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers [*i.e.* the rhythm] unpleasing." This is Johnson's criticism of *Lycidas*. Try to find examples in the poem which would justify Johnson's views.

8. Which is Milton's most famous sonnet? Show what Johnson means by his comment on "the fabrick of a sonnet." What are the two main types of sonnet in English?

9. Find out what you can about Garrick and Reynolds.

10. Describe your own first meeting with a friend whom you have subsequently come to admire. Include in your description as much conversation as you can remember.

11. "Two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery toward the North Pole." Describe some more modern voyage of discovery toward the North (or the South) Pole.

12. Write in your own words the familiar story of Nelson's signal at Trafalgar.

#### IV. TRAVEL

1. Choose three adjectives that would aptly describe Cobbett's style. Quote two brief passages to illustrate your epithets and make brief comments on the passages.

2. "We begin with a sturdy, fiery-headed, common-sense Englishman of the late eighteenth century." Show how the extract from *Rural Rides* reveals the character depicted in this sentence.

3. In these days there is a great outcry against the spoiling of the countryside by ugly buildings and ugly advertisements. Imagine Cobbett riding along a country-lane that has been so spoiled. Write a paragraph such as you imagine he might have written.

4. What has Cobbett to say about trees?

5. What do you know of (a) Mr Canning, (b) Swift?



6. There are many Spanish words in the Borrow extract (e.g. *posada* on p. 118). Find out their meaning and substitute an English word for each of them.

7. What do you think to be (a) the best descriptive passage, (b) the best piece of conversation, in "Journeying in Spain"? Give your reasons.

8. Write a paragraph of your own on the miniature picture of Spain and some of its people given by George Borrow.

9. Kinglake writes splendid rhythmical sentences. Choose carefully any three that you consider especially beautiful in sound.

10. "A quiet humour flickers in this extract" ["Turkish Travelling"]. Where? Find sentences or passages that strike you as humorous.

11. What does the word *lions* mean on p. 143? Write the paragraph beginning "There are few countries..." in plain simple English.

12. Which of the characters pictured by Kinglake in this extract do you prefer? Give reasons for your choice.

13. Put the Travel Extracts in what you consider to be the order of their interest. Set out the reasons which lead you to your opinion.

## V. NATURE

1. There is a familiarity about Walton's style—it seems as if he were talking to you personally. In what ways does he obtain this effect?

2. In this passage Isaac Walton gives some detailed directions in the matter of fly-fishing. Read the passage carefully (pp. 151–153). Now give similar directions regarding some hobby of your own.

3. Notice the simple beauty of the last two sentences of the extract "Fly-fishing." Write a simple descriptive essay called "After the rain."

4. Imagine that the scenes Gilbert White describes (in "A Remarkable Frost") had happened this term. Write a brief news-article on the theme as if for a daily newspaper.

5. Find these words and phrases in the passages from White's *Selborne*. Note their use and then put each of them into sentences of your own: *rigorous*, *prodigious*, *grotesque*, *ne plus ultra*, *metropolis*, *declension*, *portentous*, *phenomena*, *ferruginous*, *quicksilver*.

What does *ipsa silentia terrent* (p. 160) mean?

6. Write down your own recollection of any severe frost or thunderstorm.

7. White seems at a loss to explain the sudden thaw after the great frost. How would the weather experts explain it today?

8. "The lowly headstone...that has no inscription but the two letters 'G.W.'"

Suppose you were asked to write an epitaph for Gilbert White. What would you say of him? (Your epitaph may be of your own making, or it may be a quotation, *e.g.* from the Bible.)

9. Quote a passage in which Hudson reveals (a) his power and habit of observation, (b) his tenderness of heart, (c) his indignation.

10. What is the origin of these two quotations?—"unprofitably gay" (p. 164), and "the pestilence-stricken multitudes" (p. 169). Could you add a quotation from the Bible to the sentence beginning "Presently a great blackness..." (p. 164)?

11. You go for a country ramble on an afternoon in (a) Spring, (b) Winter. Write down (as Hudson did) what you see.

12. Try to "picture," in a brief paragraph, each of the three writers of these Nature passages.

## VI. HISTORY

1. Find out the meaning and use of the following words in the first passage, and use them in sentences of your own: *intrepid, clemency, suppliant, maritime, susceptible, abdication, pusillanimous, deprecating, sacerdotal, dissolute, evolutions*.

2. Show in a brief note how Gibbon relieves and illustrates his narrative with anecdote.

3. Draw a map to illustrate Attila's invasion of Italy.

4. Sum up the character of Attila in about 200 words.

5. Write a note on the rise of Venice, as Gibbon pictures it in this passage. Note how vividly he portrays the geographical position of Venice.

6. Write a short essay on military methods of the barbarians.

7. Show in what ways Macaulay uses the effect of contrast in his essay on Warren Hastings.

8. Write notes on the following:

- (a) He seems to have been more of a Trissotin.
- (b) Provincial blue-stockings.
- (c) He had appeared at that bar once before.
- (d) In the Sheldonian Theatre.
- (e) The temple of silence and reconciliation.

9. Imagine that Warren Hastings in the last years of his life had written a verse on his impeachment. Imagine and write down (in prose form) what he might have put in it.

10. Write a few sentences about each of the most famous seamen of Queen Elizabeth's time.

11. "Listening, with hearts beating to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset." Describe the famous picture which illustrates this sentence.

12. How is exploration carried out today? Describe (a) a recent long journey in an aeroplane or airship, (b) a recent expedition to the North or South Pole, (c) the ascent of a big mountain.

13. In what famous novel do you read of the doings of Elizabethan sailors? Write a brief essay on it, and give your own opinion of it.

14. "Where Raleigh smoked his first tobacco." Tell in your own words any familiar legend or anecdote about Raleigh and his newly found treasure.

## VII. PUBLIC SPEECHES

1. Mention one or two ways (with examples from the speeches printed here) in which the style of a speech differs from that of normal writing.

2. What is meant by rhetorical effect? Give examples of it from these speeches.

3. Illustrate Burke's use of metaphorical language.

4. "The effect of Burke's speech is overwhelming and grand; the appeal of John Bright's is strong and human." Do you agree? Write a brief note to show the difference between the two speeches.

5. What evidence does Mr Baldwin give in his speech that he retains his boyhood?

6. Who was Talbot Baines Reed? Write a brief note on the other writers, or as many of them as possible, whom Mr Baldwin mentions.

7. Imagine that Burke was speaking from notes. Write down the notes you would have needed had you made his speech.

8. You are asked to make a ten-minute speech at the twenty-first birthday party of your school magazine. Write down (a) your notes for the speech, (b) your peroration.

9. Describe the cover of the *Boy's Own Paper* as it is today.

